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THE
D I V I N E R U L E
OF
FAITH AND PRACTICE.

THE
DIVINE RULE
 OF
FAITH AND PRACTICE;
 OR,
A DEFENCE OF THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE
 THAT
HOLY SCRIPTURE
 HAS BEEN SINCE THE TIMES OF THE APOSTLES
 THE SOLE DIVINE RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE TO THE CHURCH,
 AGAINST THE DANGEROUS ERRORS OF
 THE AUTHORS OF THE TRACTS FOR THE TIMES, AND
 THE ROMANISTS,
 AS, PARTICULARLY, THAT THE RULE OF FAITH IS "MADE UP OF SCRIPTURE AND
 TRADITION TOGETHER;" &c.
 IN WHICH ALSO THE DOCTRINES OF
 The Apostolical Succession, the Eucharistic Sacrifice, &c.
 ARE FULLY DISCUSSED.

BY **WILLIAM GOODE, M. A.**
 OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE; RECTOR OF ST. ANTHOLIN, LONDON.

Hæretici quum ex Scripturis arguuntur, in accusationem convertuntur ipsarum Scripturarum, . . . quia varie sint dictas, et quia non possit ex his inveniri veritas ab his qui nesciant Traditionem. Non enim per litteras traditam illam, sed per vivam vocem.

IRENÆUS.

Φαντα ελπιουσιν πιστους και υπακοφους καταγομεν, η αδοταν τι των γραμμενων, η εκ των αυτων των μη γραμμενων.—BASIL.

Αυτα, ουκ εστι αι αληθειαι και βιωσιμους γραφαι προς τον της αληθειας απαγγελαν.—ATHANASIUS.

I see not how you differ from that opinion which is THE GROUND OF ALL PAPISTRY, that is, *that all things necessary unto salvation are not EXPRESSED in the Scriptures . . .* There is nothing necessary to eternal life which is not both commanded and expressed in the Scripture. I count it expressed when it is either in *manifest* words contained in Scripture, or thereof gathered by *necessary* collection.—ARCHBISHOP WHITGIFT.

We of the Church of England affirm that the Scriptures contain a COMPLETE RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE, and we reject every doctrine and precept as essential to salvation, or to be obeyed as divine, which is not supported by their authority.—BISHOP TOMLINE.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA :
 HERMAN HOOKER,
 CORNER OF FIFTH AND CHESTNUT STREETS.

1842.

TO
THE MOST REV.
WILLIAM, LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,
AND
THE RIGHT REV.
CHARLES JAMES, LORD BISHOP OF LONDON,
THIS WORK
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY
THEIR OBLIGED AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE movement that has lately taken place in our Church under the auspices of the Authors of the Tracts for the Times, whatever may be the view taken of it, must be admitted to be one of a very important kind. Whether for good or evil, the degree of development it has already attained, amply shows that its success must be attended with a great and thorough change in the principles and practices of our Church in various most important points.

That such would be the case, was for a long time studiously concealed from public view. So much caution, indeed, was exercised in the earlier part of their career by the Tractators, that to none but those who were somewhat acquainted with the controversial writings of divines on the points touched upon, so as to see the full force and tendency of the terms used, was it apparent whither they were going; though to such, I may add, it was abundantly evident. And the first intimation of it to the public mind was in the very seasonable publication of Mr. Froude's Remains, a work which clearly and most opportunely revealed the real spirit and views of the (to use Mr. Froude's *own* term) "conspirators" against the present order of things in our Church. As time has advanced, and the number of their adherents increased, the reserve formerly practised has been gradually thrown aside. Perhaps, indeed, their own views have become more fixed and definite than when they commenced their labours. And we are far from laying to their charge any other concealment than such as they judged to be wise and prudent for the inculcation of new and unpalatable truths; though we may be pardoned for observing, that a more open course appears to us to be (to use a mild term) much freer from objections.

It is now, then, openly avowed, that the Articles, though "it is notorious that they were drawn up by Protestants and *intended for the establishment of Protestantism*," are not to be interpreted according to "the known opinions of their framers," but in what the Tractators are pleased to call a "Catholic" sense,¹ which interpretation we are informed "was intended to be admissible, though not that which their authors took themselves," in order to "comprehend those who did not go so far in Protestantism as themselves;" though the Articles are said, in the very title prefixed to them, to have been drawn up "for the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true religion;" and were put forth in compliance with the request of the lower House of Convocation, "that certain articles containing the principal grounds of the Christian religion be set forth, as well to *determine the truth of things this day in controversy*, as also to show *what errors are chiefly to be eschewed*."² And the "Declaration" prefixed to the Articles, requiring them to be interpreted in the "literal and grammatical sense," "sanctions" such a mode of interpretation.³ That is, the "literal and grammatical sense" comprehends that "uncatholic" and Protestant doctrine against which the Tractators protest, and also that *opposite* "catholic" doctrine which they embrace. And this "catholic" doctrine is such as is *consistent with the decrees of the Council of Trent*.⁴ And the Declaration, forbidding any person to "affix any *new* sense to any article," "was promulgated," we are told, "at a time when the leading men of our Church were especially noted for catholic views."⁵ But surely, if the "literal and grammatical sense" of the Articles comprehends so much as the Tractators suppose, and men had all along subscribed the Articles with propriety, though varying in their sentiments from the Protestantism of Bishop Jewell,⁶ to the "Catholicism" which squared with the Decrees of the Council of Trent, it was rather a useless admonition, for the wit of man could hardly devise a sense of the Articles not to be found within such an extensive range as this.

And the very men, be it observed, who say that these Articles, carefully drawn up "for the establishment of Protestantism," will bear meanings ranging from Protestantism to that Anti-protestantism that agrees with the decisions of the Council of Trent, tell us, that in the writings of the Fathers, a representation of the orthodox faith is to be found, so clearly and

¹ No. 90. p. 80. ² Ib. p. 81. 2d edit. p. 82. ³ Wilk. Conc. iv. 240.

⁴ No. 90. p. 80.

⁵ See the whole of No. 90.

⁶ Ib. p. 80.

⁷ The opposition of which to the catholicism of the Tractators may be judged of by an article in the British Critic for July, 1841.

definitely delivered in the consentient testimony of all of them, that so far from there being any uncertainty as to their meaning, the orthodox faith as thus delivered is "an obvious historical fact;" from which flows the very convenient consequence, that he who follows it has all the benefit of infallibility without incurring the odium of claiming it.¹

Moreover, to "talk of the 'blessings of emancipation from the Papal yoke,'" is to use a phrase of a "bold and UNDUTIFUL tenour."² "To call the earlier reformers martyrs, is to beg the question, which of course Protestants do not consider a question; but which *no one pretending to the name of Catholic can for a moment think of conceding to them*, viz. whether that for which these persons suffered were the 'truth.'³" "Protestantism, in its essence, and in all its bearings, is characteristically the religion of corrupt human nature."⁴ "The Protestant tone of doctrine and thought is essentially antichristian."⁵ The reader will observe, that the term used in these denunciations is no longer, as at first, "ultra-Protestantism," but (with a candour which we should have been glad to have seen from the commencement) "Protestantism."

The present feelings and objects of the Tractators have been clearly set forth by themselves in the following words. "By clinging to the authority of these reformers, as individuals," they say, "are we not DEALING UNFAIRLY both with Protestants and other branches of the Catholic Church? Are we not *holding out false colours to the former*, and drawing them near us, only in the end to be alienated from us more completely than ever? On the other hand, are we not cutting ourselves off from the latter, (who are our natural allies,) by making common cause with A SET OF WRITERS WITH WHOM, IN SUCH MEASURE AS WE HAVE IMBED THE TRUE CATHOLIC SPIRIT, WE CAN HAVE NO SORT OF SYMPATHY? Meanwhile, to the unprejudiced inquirers after truth (a large and growing number) are we not, until we have *shaken off such auxiliaries as these*, exhibiting a very distorted and unreal representation of the Catholicism to which we desire to attract them; holding before them a phantom which will elude their grasp, a light which will cheat their pursuit; unsettling their early prepossessions, without affording a complete and satisfactory equivalent; disquieting them in their present home, without furnishing them even with a shelter? This should be well considered. It ought not to be for nothing; no, nor for anything short of some *very vital truth*; some truth not to be rejected

¹ See Newman's Lect. pp. 224, 5.

² Brit. Crit. July, 1841. p. 2.

³ Ib. p. 14.

⁴ Ib. p. 27.

⁵ Ib. p. 29.

without fatal error, nor embraced without *radical change*; that persons of name and influence should venture upon the part of '*ecclesiastical agitators*;' intrude upon the peace of the contented, and raise doubts in the minds of the uncomplaining; *tear the Church with controversy*, alarm serious men, and interrupt the established order of things; set the '*father against the son, and the mother against the daughter*;' and lead the taught to say, 'I have more understanding than my teacher.' **ALL THIS HAS BEEN DONE**; and all this is worth hazarding in a matter of life and death; much of it is predicted as the characteristic result, and therefore the sure criterion, of the Truth. *An object thus momentous we believe to be the UNPROTESTANTIZING* (to use an offensive but forcible word) *of the national Church*; and accordingly we are ready to endure, however we may lament, the undeniable, and in themselves disastrous, effects of the pending controversy. . . . *We cannot stand where we are, we must go backwards or forwards; and it will surely be the latter.* It is absolutely necessary towards the consistency of the system which certain parties are labouring to restore, that truths should be clearly stated, which as yet have been but intimated, and others developed, which are now but in germ. **AND AS WE GO ON, WE MUST RECEDE MORE AND MORE FROM THE PRINCIPLES, IF ANY SUCH THERE BE, OF THE ENGLISH REFORMATION.**¹ Such is the language now held by the Tractators, in their organ the British Critic.

Now if by "we" in this passage they mean *themselves*, it is only what all who really understood their principles foresaw from the commencement of their career. But if by "we" they mean the English Church, then we trust that they will find that there is much difference between the temporary impression produced by taking men by surprise under "*false colours*," and that which is made by the power of truth, accompanied by the blessing of God. That the English Church is to go "forwards" with the Tractators into all the false doctrines and mummeries of Popery now openly advocated by them, even to the primary false principle, that the Church ought to assume the appearance of one great spiritual monarchy, with the Pope at the head of it,² is, we trust a prediction that has little probability of being realized.

It is, if possible, still more painful to contemplate the fact,

¹ British Critic for July 1841, pp. 44, 45.

² "Of course, union of the whole Church under one visible government is abstractedly the most perfect state. We were so united, and now are not. And the history of this great struggle for religious independence . . . is, in any case, the record of the origin and progress of *that deplorable schism*. . . . We talk of the 'blessings of emancipation from the Papal yoke,' and use other phrases of a like **bold and UNBUTIFUL** tenour."—Brit. Crit. for July 1841, p. 2.

that these remarks were published by those who profess the highest possible regard for the authority of their spiritual rulers, and not long after one of the heads of the party had, with many professions of submission to the wishes of his Diocesan, consented to close the series of the "Tracts for the Times;" while he is here identified with "ecclesiastical agitators," ready to use every effort, and brave every difficulty, and throw the Church into confusion, to the setting of "father against son, and mother against daughter," for the purpose of effecting the design of "*unprotestantizing*" the Church! Such is the *practical* influence of their inordinate views of Church authority.

The reader will observe that in their use of the word "Catholic," the Tractators are directly opposed to our Reformers. Our Reformers were so far from thinking that Protestantism and Catholicism were opposed to each other, that one ground for their supporting the former was, their conviction that it best deserved the title of the latter. Bishop Jewell believed that it was the Reformation that restored the "*antient religion*" (to use the reviewer's phrase) to our Church. And both he and, I believe I may say, all the more learned Reformers claimed the name "Catholic," as belonging more peculiarly to themselves, than to those who, both in the Western and Eastern Churches, had corrupted the pure faith and worship of the primitive Church. The Tractators, therefore, like the Romanists, are at issue with the Reformers as to *what is* "Catholicism," and the "*antient religion*." This the reader ought carefully to bear in mind, lest he be deceived, as too many suffer themselves to be, by words and phrases. And the same caution must be given as to the Tractators' repudiation of the charge of holding Romish tenets. Their repudiation of it is grounded merely upon their rejection of certain more gross impositions and practices of the Church of Rome; while, upon various most important points and leading features in that vast system of religious priestcraft, they are altogether in agreement with her. There is a previous question, then, to be determined, before their repudiation of the charge can be of any practical use, viz. What is Romanism? If, as our Archbishop Whitgift tells us, their doctrine on the rule of faith is "*the ground of all Papistry*," their verbal disclaimer of Papistry is mere idle talk. But unfortunately, to the ordinary reader, this equivocal use of terms throws the whole subject into inextricable confusion. It is very hard, he will say, that those should be accused of holding Romish doctrines, who have expressly repudiated and even abused Romanism. And is it not most desirable that we should hold "Catholic" doctrines and the "*antient religion*?" On these points, however, this is

not the place to enlarge, as they will more properly come under our consideration in a subsequent page.

With these facts and statements before his eyes, the reader will not be surprised to learn that the Romanists are loudly hailing the efforts of the Tractators, as directly tending to the re-establishment of their doctrines, as the doctrines of the Anglican Church. "We may depend," says Dr. Wiseman,¹ "upon a willing, an able, and a most zealous co-operation [i. e. on the part of the Tractators] with any effort which we may make towards bringing her [i. e. the Anglican Church] into her rightful position in catholic unity with the Holy See, and the Churches of its obedience—in other words, with the Church Catholic." (p. 11.) And among other proofs of the truth of this, he remarks,—“It seems to me impossible to read the works of the Oxford divines, and especially to follow them chronologically, without discovering a daily approach towards our holy Church, both in doctrine and in affectionate feeling. Our saints, our popes, have become dear to them by little and little; our rites and ceremonies, our offices, nay, our very rubrics, are precious in their eyes, *far, alas! beyond what many of us consider them*; our monastic institutions, our charitable and educational provisions, have become more and more objects with them of earnest study; and everything, in fine, that concerns our religion, deeply interests their attention. . . . Their admiration of our institutions and practices, and their regret at having lost them, manifestly spring from the value which they set upon everything Catholic; and to suppose them (without an insincerity which they have given us no right to charge them with,) to love the parts of a system and wish for them, while they would reject the root and only secure support of them—the system itself—is to my mind revoltingly contradictory.” (pp. 13, 14.) “Further proof of the view which I present, is this; that general dissatisfaction at the system of the Anglican Church is clearly expressed in the works of these authors; it is not a blame cast on one article or another, it is not blemish found in one practice, or a Catholic want in a second, or a Protestant redundancy in a third: but there is *an impatient sickness of the whole*; it is the weariness of a man who carries a burthen,—it is not of any individual stick of his faggot that he complains,—it is the bundle which tires and worries him . . . the Protestant spirit of the Articles in the aggregate, and their *insupportable uncatholicism* in specific points, the loss of ordinances, sacraments, and liturgical rites; the ex-

¹ A letter on Catholic Unity, to the Earl of Shrewsbury, by Nicholas, Bishop of Melipotamus.

tion of the monastic and ascetic feeling and observances ; the decay of 'awe, mystery, tenderness, reverence, devotedness, and other feelings which may be specially called Catholic' (Letter to Dr Jelf, p. 26.); the miserable feeling of solitariness and separation above described,—these are but a portion of the grievances whereof we meet complaints at every turn, the removal of which would involve *so thorough a change in the essential condition* of the Anglican Church, as these writers must feel would bring her within the sphere of attraction of all absorbing unity, and could not long withhold her from the embrace of its centre." (pp. 16, 17.)

Still further proof is justly found in the statements of Mr. Warde, who deeply regrets our Church's "present corruption and degradation," hears with pain the words "pure and apostolical" applied to her ; thinks that "the mark of being Christ's kingdom" "is obscured and but faintly traced on the English Church ;" and speaks of "those sisters in other lands from whom she has been so long and *so fatally dissevered*," and of her restoration to "active communion with the rest of Christendom ;" in terms, the meaning of which cannot be misunderstood. (pp. 18, 19.) As might be excepted, the endeavour to pervert our Articles to a Tridentine sense, is eagerly caught at, as smoothing the way to a full and complete return to Popery. "A still more promising circumstance," he says, "I think your lordship with me will consider, the plan which the eventful Tract No. 90 has pursued ; and in which Mr. Warde, Mr. Oakley, and even Dr. Pusey, have agreed. I allude to the method of bringing their doctrines into accordance with ours, by explanation. A foreign priest has pointed out to us a valuable document for our consideration,—'Bossuet's Reply to the Pope,'—when consulted on the best method of reconciling the followers of the Augsburg Confession with the Holy See. The learned Bishop observes, that Providence had allowed so much Catholic truth to be preserved in that Confession, that full advantage should be taken of the circumstance : that *no retractions* should be demanded, but an *explanation* of the Confession in accordance with Catholic doctrines. Now, for such a method as this, the way is in part prepared by the demonstration that such interpretation may be given of the most difficult Articles, as will strip them of all contradiction to the decrees of the Tridentine Synod." (p. 38.) This instructive passage the reader will do well to ponder. Notwithstanding "the Protestant spirit of the Articles in the aggregate, and their *insupportable uncatholicism* in specific points," the magic wand of an "explanation" will "strip them of all contradiction to the decrees of the Tridentine Synod itself, and the statements for which Rome has so often made thousands pay the penalty

with their blood, are now found to be nothing more than what are easily reconcilable with the statements of Trent itself.

It may not be known to many that a very similar attempt to reconcile our Articles with the doctrines of the Romish Church was made two centuries ago by an English convert to Popery, named Christopher Davenport, but who is better known by his Romish name of Francis a Sancta Clara. The work is entitled "*Deus, Natura, Gratia*,"¹ and was written for the purpose of *explaining* many of the most important of the 'Thirty-nine Articles, so as to make them conformable to the Tridentine statements: and he adds, at the end, a "paraphrastic exposition" of the rest of them, proceeding upon the same principles, wherein he maintains that they need only a befitting gloss to reconcile them all to good sound Popery. And for learning and ingenuity our modern *Reconciler* is not to be compared to him. But, in all the most important points, the similarity between the two is remarkable.

Thus, when it is said in Art. xi. that "we are justified by faith only," here, saith Mr. Newman, "faith, as being the beginning of perfect or justifying righteousness, is taken for what it tends towards, or ultimately will be. It is said, by anticipation, to be that which it promises; *just as one might pay a labourer his hire, before he began his work*," &c. &c. (No. 90, 2d ed. p. 13.) So Francis a Sancta Clara says that, "because faith is the foundation of our justification *and spiritual life*," *therefore* justification, and the salvation of man is attributed to faith." Justification is often attributed to faith; "because faith is the gate and foundation of it, and the whole spiritual structure."² "If you say that justification is acquired through faith, by means of an application or apprehension of the merits or righteousness of Christ, I think that it may bear a sound and Catholic sense; because, in good truth, we, through faith, . . . by believing the promises of God in Christ, or the merits of Christ's sufferings, by praying, by loving, &c. at length obtain, through Christ, *our righteousness*. This is their doctrine and ours; nor do they give more to faith than the Council of Trent, in the matter of justification, if they are cautiously explained; namely, in the way just mentioned. *But the point in dispute is, what faith* we are to understand. . . . They themselves attribute it, not to that special kind of faith, but to the faith of Christ, as we do. For, in the Articles of the English Confession, no faith is specified, but

¹ *Deus, Natura, Gratia. Sive Tractatus de Prædestinatione, de Meritis et peccatorum remissione, seu de Justificatione et denique de Sanctorum Invocatione. Ubi ad trutinam fidei Catholicæ examinatur Confessio Anglicana, &c. Accessit paraphrastica Expositio reliquorum Articulorum Confessionis Anglicanæ. 2a. ed. Lugd. 1634. 8vo.*

² p. 192.

the faith of which the Apostles everywhere speak. Therefore there is no difference between us on this point. *But what is added in the Homily parenthetically, 'This would be to attribute justification to a habit or act in us,' seems to deny inherent righteousness; but, in truth, nothing was less meant, for it is immediately added, 'But it is God who justifies.' . . . Behold, therefore, we clearly and fully agree.*"¹

Again, on Art. xii. on works before justification, which states that "works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God," and do not "make men meet to receive grace, or deserve grace of congruity," &c.; Mr. Newman tells us that though it would be "Pelagianism" to say that those who are in utter destitution of grace, can do anything to gain justification, yet there is "an intermediate state" between being "in a state of Christian justification," and utterly destitute of divine aid; and that so, notwithstanding this Article, "it is quite true that works done *with* divine aid, and in faith, *before* justification, do dispose men to receive the grace of justification,—such were Cornelius's alms, fastings and prayers, which led to his baptism." So Francis a Sancta Clara says, that it would, indeed, be the Pelagian heresy to say that, from the acts of freewill, done without any aid from God, we could merit justification of congruity;² but, nevertheless, "with the aid of the first bestowed grace preceding, we can, by seeking and striving, obtain further aids, and in some way *deserve of congruity the first habitual justifying grace*,"³ and thus the alms of Cornelius merited the faith of Christ;⁴ and that, in this Article, "it is manifest that such works only are excluded, as it regards merit of congruity, with respect to our justification, as are done before the faith of Christ; nay, *before the first actual grace, or the inspiration of the Holy Spirit* (as they say); since, therefore, the exception proves the rule as it respects the opposite, as lawyers say, it follows that *other works, namely, those done from faith, can in some measure lead to and deserve of congruity the grace of justification*."⁵

Further on Art. xxii. that "the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, &c." Mr. Newman says, "the first remark that occurs on perusing this Article is, that the doctrine objected to is 'the *Romish doctrine*.' . . Accordingly the *primitive* doctrine is not condemned in it. . . . Now there was a primitive doctrine on all these

¹ pp. 202, 3.
⁴ p. 159.

² pp. 15, 16.
⁵ p. 160.

³ p. 152.
⁶ p. 170.

points, &c.” “And further, by the ‘Romish doctrine,’ is not meant the Tridentine statement . . . there are portions in the Tridentine statements on these subjects which the Article, far from condemning,¹ by anticipation approves as far as they go.” And what he considers condemned, is “the received doctrine” among Romanists, or “the doctrine of the Roman schools;” but how determined, he does not tell us. So Francis a Sancta Clara says of this Article, “The words, as they stand, are doubtless very harsh. But it is to be observed that the force of this Article is not directed against invocation of saints simply, or in itself, as is evident, but the *Romish* doctrine of Invocation.” And to see what was meant by “the Romish doctrine,” he says, we must observe how it is described by Protestants; and having (like Mr. Newman) extracted some honest representations of it from Protestant writers, he adds, that it is not to be wondered at that such a doctrine was condemned; they themselves condemned it; and he points to the Tridentine statements as showing this. “The conclusion,” he says, “is, that the Anglican Confession has determined nothing against the truth of the faith; it has only exploded the impious and heathen doctrine falsely imputed to the Church.”² “In the same way evidently, and by the same mode of speaking,” he adds, “they reject, in the same Article, *not* Purgatory, Indulgences, the adoration of images and relics, *in themselves*, but as before, the *Romish doctrine* on all these points; that is, the doctrine falsely imputed to us;”³ proceeding to show that the Article did not condemn good sound *Tridentine* doctrine. “Here, therefore,” he concludes, “there will be peace altogether with the Anglican Confession, if only all things are weighed as they deserve, without party spirit, and with only a regard to truth.”⁴

These, with similar explanations of other Articles, occur in the body of the work. In the “Paraphrastic Exposition of the other Articles,” at the end, the same course is adopted. We will compare those on Art. xxviii. on Transubstantiation, and Art. xxxi. on Masses.

“What is here opposed as ‘Transubstantiation,’” says Mr. Newman on Art. xxviii., “is the shocking doctrine that ‘the body of Christ,’ as the Article goes on to express it, is not ‘given, taken, and eaten after an heavenly and spiritual manner, but is carnally pressed with the teeth;’ that it is a body or substance of a certain extension, &c. . . . whereas we hold that the only substance such is the bread which we see.” (p. 47.) “In denying a ‘mutatio panis et vini,’” it is *not* “denying every kind of change.” (p. 51.) But it is “*literally true*” that “*the consecrated*

¹ p. 23.² p. 24.³ pp. 349, 50.⁴ p. 351.⁵ p. 353.

bread is Christ's body" (p. 58.) ; his body is *spiritual*, and hence it may be "that Christ's *Body and Blood* are locally at God's right hand, yet really present here,—present here, but not here in place—*because they are spirit*." (pp. 55, 6. See the whole of pp. 47—58.) So Francis a Sancta Clara says that the authors of our Articles "only condemned, in this Article, the antient error of the Capharnaites, namely, a carnal presence of Christ ; that is, as if Christ was present here in a natural or carnal mode, and was pressed by our teeth ;" and that the bread should undergo such a change, is repugnant to Scripture, "as the Article rightly affirms ;" and that when the Article denies a change of the bread and wine, it only denies *such* a change as this ; and not that which "the Church" means, &c. &c. (pp. 388—90.)

Again, on Art. xxxi. on Masses, Mr. Newman says, "Nothing can show more clearly than this passage, that the Articles are not written against the creed of the Roman Church, but against actual existing errors in it ;" "the 'blasphemous fable' is the teaching that masses are sacrifices for sin, *distinct from* the sacrifice of Christ's death." "The Article before us neither speaks against the Mass in itself, nor against its being an offering, though commemorative, for the quick and the dead, for the remission of sin." (pp. 59, 60, 63.) So Francis a Sancta Clara says, that "there is nothing here against the sacrifices of the Mass in themselves, but against the vulgar or common notion respecting them, namely, that the priests in their sacrifices offer Christ for the quick and the dead, for remission of sin and transgression ; so as to be able, by virtue of this sacrifice offered by them, *independent* of the sacrifice of the cross, meritoriously to procure for the people remission, &c." (p. 400.)

Such was the attempt made, two centuries ago, to reconcile our Protestant Articles with the dogmas of Popery. But at that time the nation had been but too recently emancipated from the Papal yoke, and her traditional remembrances of Popery were too fresh, to admit of her being so easily beguiled by fine words and plausible phrases. And it so happens that we have ARCHBISHOP LAUD's own testimony to his having "*absolutely denied*" permission to the author to have the work printed in England. For, it being one of the charges against him at his trial, that he had "harboured and relieved divers Popish priests and Jesuits, namely, one called *Sancta Clara* alias *Davenport*, a dangerous person, and Franciscan Friar, who hath written a Popish and seditious book, entitled *Deus, Natura, Gratia*, &c., wherein the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, established by Act of Parliament, are much traduced and scandalized ; the said Archbishop had divers conferences with him while he was in

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writing the said book,"¹ &c., the Archbishop tells us² that his reply was, that the author of this work, having come to him to ask his license for printing it, and having communicated to him its substance, "*I found the scope of his book to be such as that the Church of England would have little cause to thank him for it, and so absolutely denied it.*"

The object which the Tractators and the Romanists have in view in thus putting our Articles upon the rack to make them consistent with their views, is, from the foregoing extracts, sufficiently clear, namely, the more easy reduction of our Church, as a whole, to its former union with the Romish See, when the explanation, having served its purpose, would be, with the Articles themselves, indignantly thrown overboard, to make way for a truly "Catholic" exposition of the faith dictated at Rome. And then I suspect the poor remnant of the despised Protestants might sigh in vain for a "Catholic" confession sufficiently indulgent to include an "uncatholic" meaning, thankful as they would be to be indulged only with life. And if perchance the new light of another age should enable some gifted Protestant to show how easily Pope Pius's creed might be understood in a good Protestant sense, let us hope that Rome also would see in a new light her duty to her neighbour.

May God in his infinite mercy avert from us the evils which threaten us.

It would be difficult to overrate the responsibility resting at the present time upon the heads of our Church. There are those within the Church who, so far from being affectionately attached to her doctrines and practices, think that the very "mark of being Christ's kingdom" is "but faintly traced on her," mourn over her Articles and services as framed by persons of a thoroughly uncatholic spirit, and framed "*for the establishment*" of a system which they believe to be even Antichristian, "the religion of corrupt human nature;" and avow themselves "ecclesiastical agitators," purposing to avail themselves of every means of overturning that system, and "unprotestantizing" the Church. There are others who, having adopted, with all the ardour of youth and inexperience, the same views, are seeking to enter our Church, that they may add their efforts to the accomplishment of the same end. All the oaths, declarations, and subscriptions required by the Protestant restorers of our Church as safeguards against the re-introduction of those

¹ Canterbury's Doom, or Prynne's Account of Trial of Archbishop Laud, p. 34, as quoted in Wood's Ath. Oxon.

² See Archbishop Laud's History of his Troubles, p. 385.

doctrines and practices to which these persons are attached, form, in their view, no impediment to their either remaining or seeking to become ministers of a Protestant Church, for the purpose of "unprotestantizing" it; the righteous end sanctifying, I suppose, (according to the well-known "Catholic" doctrine) the unrighteous means. This is no question, then, of high or low Churchmanship, of Calvinism or Arminianism, of this or that shade of doctrine, in which a latitude may justly be allowed. No, as the Tractators themselves tell us, "*very vital truths*" are concerned in the *change* they desire to effect in our Church, even "*matters of life or death.*"¹ It becomes not me to say more, than earnestly to pray that wisdom may be given to the rulers of our Church in this crisis in her history.

But it may be said, Surely there is some mistake in all this, for the Tractators have put forth their system as peculiarly entitled to the name of Anglicanism, and represented their doctrines as those of the great majority of our most illustrious divines, ever since the Reformation, and presented us with various "*Catenas*," containing extracts from the writings of those divines in proof of this. This is one of the most extraordinary and painful features in the whole case. That such representations pervade the Tracts and works of the Tractators, is but too true; and too true is it also, that upon the strength of such statements they have gained a footing in our Protestant Church, which they could never otherwise have obtained. One great object, therefore, which I have kept in view in the following work has been to show, that so far from having the support they claim in the writings of our great divines, they are refuted and opposed in the most decisive way by all the best *even of their own chosen witnesses*; and that their appeal to those writings as in their favour is one of the most unaccountable, and painful, and culpable (however unintentional) misrepresentations with which history supplies us. The fact is, that almost the only witnesses to whom they could properly refer as at all supporting their *system*, are a few individuals, such as Brett, Hicks, Johnson, and others, forming a small and extreme section of a small and extreme party in our Church, namely, the Nonjurors; and even among these it would be difficult to find one who agreed with their system as now developed. Their extracts from the works of our divines generally will be found to be, for the most part, general and loose and indefinite passages, whose meaning depends altogether upon the context, and which are *applied* by the Tractators in a sense which the views of the

¹ See extract from British Critic, p. ix. above.

writers, gathered from their works as a whole, altogether repudiate.

Is this fair and ingenuous? Was there not a more candid course open to them? Might they not have said, There is much in the Church of England that we love, much in the writings of her great divines that we approve; but in the Articles and services of the one, and in the writings of the other, there are also various things of which we disapprove, conceiving them to be opposed to antiquity. We will not quit her communion till we see what effect a statement of our views may have upon the minds of her members, though ultimately, if such changes are not made, we shall be compelled to do so. For such a course an apology might perhaps be found. It might not, indeed, have gained for them so many adherents, but it would have been far more likely to have produced a permanent effect than their present conduct. In the place of this they have chosen to withdraw a Protestant confession of faith, so as to make it appear to support Anti-protestant views, to publish extracts from staunch Protestant writers, to convert them, in the eye of the public, into opponents of Protestant principles; in a word, to represent our Church as being what it is *not*, in order to effect more easily the change they desire to bring about in it from what it is.

Almost equally incorrect and fallacious are their references to the early Fathers, of whose writings one might suppose, from the language they have used, that their knowledge was most accurate and extensive. I must be permitted to say, that the blunder Mr. Newman has made in the interpretation of a common phrase in a passage of Athanasius, the meaning of that phrase being a turning point in the bearing of many passages with relation to the present controversy,¹ shows a want of acquaintance with the phraseology of the Fathers, which ought to make us receive his citations with considerable caution. Nor can I at all account for various other erroneous representations and allegations of passages from the Fathers, to some of which I give a reference below, that the reader may at once see that there is ground for the remark,² but upon the supposition that much has been taken on trust from other and even Romish writers. And if the heads of the party are not free from such errors, it is not surprising that there are others among them still more deeply

¹ See vol. i. pp. 67—69.

² See vol. i. pp. 61—69; also the remarks of Mr. Keble respecting the Council of Nice, compared with the statements of those from whom he has himself quoted, noticed vol. ii. pp. 246 et seq.; also the citations from Chrysostom, prefixed to Tract 34, in a sense which no one reading the context could for a moment dream of, noticed vol. ii. p. 334.

involved in them. Since public attention has been more directed to antiquity, we have been inundated with papers, and letters, and remarks, especially in the periodical publications, laying down this or that doctrine with all the calm dignity of an oracular response, as what everybody always everywhere in the primitive Church from the beginning proclaimed and maintained with one consent, and showing nothing more than that their authors need to go to school on the subject on which they would fain be teachers of others. One might suppose, from the tone of some of these writers, that all that has been done or said in all past ages of the Church was to be ascertained without the smallest difficulty or uncertainty, and could even be gathered second-hand from the notices of a few modern divines. For my own part, I freely confess to being in no small degree sceptical as to the possibility of any man knowing what "everybody always everywhere" in the primitive Church thought on any point; even from a careful perusal of the records of antiquity themselves that remain to us. Indeed, though I can quite conceive a monk in his cell getting together the works of some few dozen authors of great name, and fancying himself able hence to vouch for the sentiments of "everybody always everywhere," I feel a difficulty in understanding how men of judgment and experience can allow themselves to be so deluded. But still less are such representations to be taken from those who have not even made themselves acquainted with those sources of information that are open to us. It would be amusing, were it a less important subject, to see the way in which, under the much-abused name of "*Catholic*," mistakes and corruptions are recommended to public attention, almost as if our salvation depended upon them. Statements, indeed, more uncatholic than some that the Tractators themselves have made,—as for instance that of Dr. Pusey, that "to the decisions of the Church Universal we owe faith,"—were never uttered. We appeal for proof to the writings of the early Church.

For myself I make no pretensions to any superior knowledge of antiquity, nor desire to set up my own judgment of its verdict as a standard for others to go by, but only to place before the reader the testimonies upon which his conclusions should be formed. And though it is almost impossible to suppose that where so many references occur there should not be some errors, I trust that the impartial reader will find that no labour has been spared to avoid them, and that the representation given of the sentiments of the Fathers is a fair, and, upon the whole, a correct one.

¹ Letter to Bishop of Oxford, p. 53.

The success of the Tractators has been to many a subject of surprise, and among others, as it seems, to themselves.¹ For my own part, when I reflect upon the temporary success that has often attended heresies and delusions of the most extravagant nature, I cannot participate in such feelings. For the partial and temporary success that they have met with in the inculcation of their doctrines there are, I think, beyond the fact of novelty, several reasons, and I trust and believe many also that may be assigned, for the hope that, under the Divine blessing, that success may be *but* partial and temporary. Such trials from internal and external foes are the Church's predicted portion in this world, and the purer any Church is, the more may she expect that her great enemy will thus afflict her. If, however, she be upon the whole sound faithful to her God, such trials will assuredly be overruled for her good; and there is perhaps nothing more inimical to her real welfare than a state of long and uninterrupted calm and prosperity.

One principal cause, then, of the temporary success of the movement made by the Tractators, has evidently been, that it fell in with the current of men's feelings in the Church at the time. At the period when they commenced their labours, the Church was beset with dangers. The various sects that have separated themselves from her communion had (with one honourable exception) risen up against her with all the bitterness and jealousy of a sordid spirit of worldly rivalry, and had avowed that nothing would satisfy them but her complete overthrow as the National Church, and the extinction of all her peculiar privileges. A Ministry which, if not directly hostile, was made so by its dependence upon the enemies of the Church, a hostile House of Commons, a country kept in agitation for party purposes, and from various causes excited against all its constituted authorities and antient institutions, combined to menace her welfare. Such events had made all her friends anxious for her safety. That which might perhaps have been a permissible relaxation of principle in the conduct of her members towards the dissenters became so no longer, when it was clearly seen that the leading object of those dissenters *as a body* was to deprive the Church of all her peculiar privileges and opportunities for the promotion of Christianity throughout the land. Co-operation with bodies influenced by such views was no longer an act of Christian charity, but a direct breach of Christian duty. The ship was in a storm. Her existence was at stake. Everything conspired to show the importance, the necessity, of union, order, regularity, subordination, obedience to constituted authorities. In a word, the dan-

¹ Brit. Crit. for July, 1841, p. 28.

gers that beset the Church, and the conduct and nature of the foes that assailed her, combined to lead all those who knew anything of Church principles, and had any regard for the Church, to serious reflection. There was in consequence a healthy reaction in favour of those principles. At this time, and under these circumstances, the Tractators commenced their labours. A more favourable moment could hardly have been found. Events had so completely prepared the way for them, that in the minds of many there was a strong predisposition in their favour. Their professions were those of warm friends of our Protestant Church. All that they blamed was "ultra-Protestantism." They claimed the support of all our great divines without exception. Antiquity was, beyond contradiction, wholly with them. Their language was cautious and plausible, and full of that self-confidence that is so influential with the popular mind. Is it surprising, then, that they should have pleased many ears, and gained many hearts, and that while they fell in with the current of feeling created by events, they should have succeeded in giving it an additional impetus in its own direction, tending to carry it to an unsalutary extreme? So far, alas! they have indeed succeeded, and thus in many cases have converted a healthy reaction into one which threatens to carry away its victims, and has indeed carried away several, into the bosom of Rome itself.

The circumstances of the times had evidently much influence upon the Tractators themselves in leading them to embrace the views they have taken up.¹ They saw that the influence of the Church over the public mind was not such as it had been in former times, and might reasonably be expected to be. And, apparently, the great problem which they thought they had to solve was, how that influence might be restored. They have not unnaturally (whether wisely or not is another question) found the hope of regaining it in the assertion of those Church-principles which form the foundation of Popery. The abuses caused by the liberty of conscience and free use of private judgment, conceded by Protestantism, are to be cured by a re-establishment of the iron grasp with which popery holds its votaries in subjection. And I must add, that their works bear such constant and manifest traces of their having been imposed upon and misled by Romish writers, that one cannot but fear that they have suffered themselves to be prejudiced in favour of that system of doctrine to which the circumstances of the times had given them a favourable bias, before they had well studied the subject in a way which alone could have entitled them to assume the

¹ See Newman's Lect. p. 14. Keble's Sermon, pp. 5—7.

office of reformers and correctors of the Church. I am much mistaken if their "Catenas" do not show either an unfairness, which I should be indeed pained at being obliged to charge them with, or a great want of acquaintance even with the works of our own great divines. And hence, instead of keeping within the bounds of that sound moderation that has always characterized the Church of England, they have, while rejecting some of the most offensive practices in the Romish church, adopted almost all the doctrines and principles which have hitherto distinguished us as a body from that corrupt Church, and seem gradually progressing to the reception of the whole system; witness the remarks that have been more than once published by them in favour even of the fopperies of monkery itself. We have Dr. Hook's authority for saying that the extreme of high Church principles is Popery. We beg the reader to ask himself whether those principles can well be carried further than they are stretched in the works of the Tractators.

And it must be added, (and this is *another reason* for their success,) that in the inculcation of their views they came upon those who were *generally, and, as a body*, unprepared by previous study for an impartial and judicious view of the subject. The low state of ecclesiastical learning among us for many past years is a truth so generally acknowledged and lamented, that it would be a waste of words to offer either an apology or a proof for the assertion. The consequences of such a want of information could not fail to be seen under such circumstances. The slightest appearance of learning carried with it a weight which, in other times, would hardly have been conceded to that which had tenfold claims to it. And under the abused name of "catholic," by the aid of Romish sophisms, and partial and inaccurate citations from the Fathers, the corrupt doctrines and practices of which our truly learned Reformers were, by God's blessing, enabled to purge the Church, are urged upon us as veritable parts of that Divine revelation delivered to the world by the Apostles. And herein, be it observed, the Tractators are at issue with those whose learning it would be idle to dispute, not merely as to the foundation upon which their system rests, the authority of patristical tradition, but as to the *fact* whether that tradition, whatever its authority may be, is in their favour. Our reformers contended that the name *catholic*, and the support of the great body of the Fathers, belonged to that system of doctrine and practice which, from its opposition to the corruptions of Romanism, was called Protestantism. And as to any of the attempts hitherto made by the Tractators or their adherents to pluck the laurels from the brows of the Reformers, and to show the inaccuracy of their allegations from the Fathers, such as

that of the British Critic in the case of Jewel it reminds one but of the puny efforts of a dwarf to espy holes in the armour of a giant.

We may add also, as a still further reason for their success, that their doctrines are such as will always, as long as human nature remains what it is, attract many to them; of the clergy, from the power they give them over the minds of men; of the laity, from their greater suitability to the notions and feelings of the natural mind. To the clergy particularly such views will always be attractive. The system of the Tractators is a far more easy and simple one to work; likely also to produce more extended and visible results. Only bring men to acknowledge the authority thus claimed for the Church and the Clergy, and their instrumentality in the work of human salvation, and you wield a power over the minds both of the religious and the superstitious almost irresistible. But address a man merely as a witness for the truth, acknowledging your fallibility, and appealing to his judgment, "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say," and your personal influence over him is not to be compared with that which exists in the former case. The truth is left to work its way by its own intrinsic power, and faith is, as it ought to be, the result of a conviction of the heart. But the cases where such conviction is wrought will be much fewer than those in which a nominal adherence to the truth will be professed under the former system of teaching. And even were it not so, the personal influence of the clergy over their respective flocks in the two cases will not bear a comparison; in the one case, the voice of the pastor is almost like the voice of God himself, for an inspired messenger could hardly demand greater deference; in the other, the pastor himself merges his own claims in that of the message, and sends his hearers to search for themselves in the book of God, whether the things that he preaches unto them are so. It cannot be a question, then, which system is naturally the most attractive to the clergy. Nay, a zealous, earnest minister of Christ, who desires nothing more than to promote the best interests of mankind, may be so attracted by the influence given by the former, purposing to use that influence only for the good of his fellow-creatures, as to have at once a secret prejudice in its favour, which blinds his eyes to the baselessness of the claims upon which it rests.

All these causes have operated in favour of the Tractators.

But there are at the same time not a few reasons also for hoping that, in the mercy of God, their success may be *but* partial and temporary.

There are encouraging symptoms of a prevalent desire among

us to search into the matter, especially since the recent publications of the Tractators have shown more fully their real views and aims. Now it is impossible for this desire to be carried into effect without their being detected in such inconsistencies, misrepresentations, and mistakes as will infallibly alter their position very materially in the eyes of many who may have been originally inclined to favour them. To some of these I have already alluded, and it would be easy to add to the list. While I am writing, my eye lights upon one in a late number of the *British Critic* (a number, by the way, which, for its flippant impertinences and gross personalities upon men who had the highest claims to at least respectful treatment, is unparalleled in such a work), made with all the coolness and confidence of one who is uttering an incontrovertible truth. For the sake of disparaging the Reformation, it is said, "Nothing is more remarkable in the theology of the Reforming age (to speak generally) than the deficiency of all writings of a devotional, or even a practical cast." (*Brit. Crit.* for July 1841, p. 3.) Now the writer of this is either profoundly ignorant of the ecclesiastical literature of that period, or he has misrepresented it for the sake of his party, and in either case is deserving of no little censure for thus misleading his readers, of whom few probably (speaking comparatively) would have the means of judging of the truth of his remark. Considering the character of the period, and the comparatively limited number of original works then published to what there are now, it is surprising how many practical works issued from the pens of our reformers and early divines, engaged as they were in the struggle with Popery. These things give reason to hope that such writers will ultimately find their level. Men do not like to be deceived, especially by those who put forth high claims to wisdom and learning. Their "quiet, self-complacent, supercilious language," as an able writer in the *British Magazine* has justly called it,¹ will be *doubly offensive* when found to be wanting in that which alone could afford the shadow of an apology for it. Their misrepresentations, in particular, of the sentiments of our great divines, by a few loose and indefinite extracts from their writings, though for a time they have (as might be expected) deceived many, can ultimately only recoil upon themselves. The disingenuousness also with which Articles of religion, drawn up by Protestant divines, "for the establishment," as is confessed, "of Protestantism," are tortured to an Antiprotestant sense, in order to enable Antiprotestants to retain their places in our Church, is so utterly irreconcilable with those com-

¹ *Brit. Mag.* for May, 1839, p. 518.

mon principles that hold society together, that it cannot fail ultimately, as indeed it has done already, to estrange the minds of simple and upright Christian men from such teaching. Indeed it is impossible not to see that it is a mere temporary expedient, which cannot long satisfy even those who have availed themselves of it, a hastily constructed refuge within the walls of our Church for those who are seeking to gain possession of the citadel, and who suppose that they have better opportunities to do so within the walls than without, but whose avowed objects make it clear that the present state of things cannot last, that one party or the other must give way. And when this becomes clearly appreciated by the Church at large, may we not justly hope that many who have been attracted to their standard while they were holding out, according to their own confession, "false colours," will, when they come to see the real state of the case, look upon them only as betrayers, and that their very best defences, their "Catenas," and high pretensions to learning and wisdom, antiquity and catholicism, will only be sources of moral weakness to their cause, and tend more than anything else to its overthrow.

That such a controversy should have arisen in our Church is deeply to be regretted. The agitation of such questions necessarily produces disunion and party spirit, the great causes of weakness, disorder, and ruin to any community that is afflicted by them. The powers of the Church are thus paralyzed, her energies spent in useless, and worse than useless contentions; her friends are discouraged and perplexed, her enemies triumph; her God is displeased, and her strength departs from her. How great the responsibility of those who have raised such a strife within her, and made it a duty incumbent upon those who have any regard for her preservation, to arm themselves against their brethren for the defence of her very foundations! But when matters of such moment are at stake, when the question is, whether the true catholicism of our reformers is to give place to a system of doctrine and practice altogether unsound, and the corruptions from which our faith and worship have through the mercy of God been purged, are to be reintroduced into our Church, it would be culpable indeed to remain a neutral, a silent, or an indifferent spectator. It becomes the duty of all to do what may be in their power to prevent such a result. The zeal, and earnestness, and perseverance with which Popish views and principles are urged upon the public mind, under the abused name of catholicism, must be met with correspondent efforts to unmask their unsoundness and dangerous tendency. In a word, if the cause for which our martyrs laid down their lives was one worthy of their blood, it is the duty of those who

have succeeded to the possession of privileges so dearly purchased, to contend with similar devotedness for their preservation and transmission unimpaired to their children. And we may humbly hope that He who out of evil oft educeth good, may grant that even this controversy may not be without its good effects. The real principles of our Church will be better known and appreciated, even among its own members and ministers. The foundation upon which it stands will, we are convinced, bear examination, and therefore, if God's blessing rest upon it, we fear not for the result.

I am aware that it may be said, and with truth, that in the present day the majority need no arguments to induce them to slight human authority, and are scarcely willing to pay deference to any other guide than their own self-will. This I fully admit, and believe that judicious works, calculated to show the danger of such a disposition of mind, might, under the Divine blessing, be of essential service to the community, both as it respects their spiritual and temporal interests. But I see no reason hence to suppose that unfounded claims to their obedience would counteract the evil. Such doctrines as those of our opponents appear to me calculated to do anything rather than become a cure. I deny not, indeed, that to many minds they are likely to appear plausible, and calculated to act as a remedy for the evils which internal dissensions have produced in the Protestant body. The liberty obtained by the Reformation has no doubt been in some cases abused. And the panacea for the evils so caused may appear to many to be the re-establishment of the iron tyranny under which the minds of men were held previous to that event. I believe this to be a growing impression in the minds of many both in this country and elsewhere, and Rome is largely availing herself of it. But whatever may be in store for this or other countries as a temporary dispensation, as a punishment for their sins, we trust that the substitution of a system in which "the Church" and "the priest" are thrust almost into the place of God and Christ, for the everlasting gospel, will be permitted to have but a very precarious and temporary hold upon the minds of men. Of this at least we are assured, that it is the duty of all who are interested in the real welfare of mankind to lay open the anti-christian nature and tendencies of such a system. Glad therefore as we should have been in being engaged in urging the just claims of antiquity and our Church to the deferential respect of mankind, and pointing out the evils and the guilt connected with that wild and lawless spirit of independence of constituted authorities now so prevalent, and painful as it is to have to point out the blemishes rather than the excellencies of the Church,

and to appear in any degree as the apologist of irregularities against which on other occasions we should feel it a duty to protest, the unfounded claims to spiritual dominion set up by the Tractators on behalf of the clergy, make it more than equally a duty to guard men against such fatal errors. The clergy were appointed, not to be either individually or collectively, as Mr. Newman would have them, "the sovereign lord of conscience," but witnesses for the truth, not lords over God's heritage, but examples to the flock, not to be mediators between God and men, but to point men to the one Mediator Christ Jesus.

The Romanists and the Tractators both tell us that divisions among Protestants are all owing to the free use of the Bible as the sole authoritative rule of faith. Not to stop to retort the charge of internal divisions, or to say that unity obtained by impositions upon the credulity of mankind is as little to be boasted of as the peace that exists among the ashes of the dead, let me ask those who for so many centuries kept the Bible as a sealed book from the hands of the people, seriously to put it to their own consciences, how far the blame rests upon their own heads. Would it be any matter for surprise if youths long debarred from their just rights should, upon finding themselves free agents, run into extremes, and not find the middle path until age and experience had enabled them to take a calm and dispassionate view of things? Why, then, should we feel surprised that the Church, upon her emancipation from the Papal yoke, should for a long time suffer from the excesses into which the restoration of her liberty has ensnared some of her members? Such divisions, indeed, are now likely to exist more or less to the end. And would that the evils caused by such divisions might lead those who are aiding in their perpetuation, to serious reflection upon the necessary consequences of their vagaries, and to a remembrance of the words of our Divine Master, that a house divided against itself falleth! But let the blame be shared by those whose conduct has tended, more than anything else, to produce such a result. The unchristian usurpations of Popery have done more than any other cause that can be named to destroy the unity of the Church, and subvert the moral influence of the clergy over the minds of men. Nor let it ever be forgotten by the Romanists, when complaining of the divided state of the Protestant body, that they have themselves, by the imposition of unchristian terms of communion, rendered themselves the most schismatical portion of all Christendom. When men are cast out of the Church by a Diotrophes, the brand of schism rests not upon the excommunicated, but upon the excommunicator.

For presenting to the public the following work, an apology

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can hardly, I suppose, be needed. It was impossible to see the deadly leaven of Popery insinuating itself into the very vitals of our Church, and that too under the venerable names of those whose lives were spent in purging it out of her, or preserving her from re-infection, without feeling that any warning (from whatever quarter it might proceed) could not be mistimed; that any effort, however it might fall short of doing full justice to the subject, could not be misplaced. I trust I shall not be misunderstood by the amiable authors of the works upon which I have here ventured to animadvert, when I say that it appeared to me to be—certainly it is equivalent in its *effects* to—treason in the camp. They have surrendered to Rome the *principles* upon which that vast system of religious fraud and imposition is built, and while they give themselves out to be the opponents, nay the best opponents, of Romanism, though limiting their opposition to a few of her most crying sins and practical abuses, they are in fact paving the way for her by upholding those *first principles* of Popery, upon which her dominion over the minds of men principally rests.

In the prosecution of the work, I have spared neither time nor labour in endeavouring to place before the reader the facts and arguments upon which his conclusions ought to rest, and further, to put him in possession of the views of the best and most able and pious writers upon the subject, both of the primitive Church and of our own. That more might have been done in this respect I freely own. But it was not composed in the calm quietude of the College, with every literary aid at hand, but (I may say it *emphatically*) amidst the cares and trials of active life. For the proper execution moreover of such a work many things are required; facilities of which the great body of the parochial clergy are destitute. Those who know what opportunities such have of supplying themselves with the original sources of information, will understand the difficulties to be encountered in the performance of such a task. I trust, however, that the work will be found, upon the whole, to contain a fair and correct representation of the facts upon which the question rests, and of the sentiments of those referred to; and that if there are some slighter inaccuracies, they are such as will not be found to affect the main argument of the work,—a circumstance which those who are *in search of truth* will appreciate, when drawing their conclusions upon the points at issue.

And here I would, once for all, acknowledge my obligations to those who have laboured in the same field before me, for many references to the Fathers, of which I have freely availed myself, when I have found them, on viewing them in their context, to afford good proof of that for which they are cited. The

authorities our earlier divines have adduced in their works against the Romanists have no doubt enabled me to push my researches much beyond what my own unassisted labours would have enabled me to do. I may be permitted to say, however, that I have endeavoured to explore the ground again with more attention to the original sources of information than has usually been paid to them here of late years, and trust that by so doing I have been enabled to add somewhat to what has been done by previous labourers in the same field.

Of the replies already published to the writings of the Tractators, I have abstained almost wholly from the perusal; the principal of them, indeed, I have not seen; any similarity, therefore, of views or statements is wholly accidental.

I appear before the public as the advocate of no particular party or system, but that of the Church of England itself. As far as human infirmity (to the effects of which no man ought to shut his eyes) may permit the remark to be made, truth has been my only object, and I have followed where it appeared to lead me. And but for the establishment of great and important truths, I trust I shall never be found upon the field of controversy. It is one which nothing but a sense of duty should ever induce me to enter.

In conclusion, I would express my sincere hope that there is nothing in the tone, or spirit, or language of the following work, of which my opponents can justly complain. If there is, I most sincerely regret it. On such important points as are there discussed, one cannot but feel warmly, and he who feels warmly is apt to express himself warmly. I must beg pardon, however, for saying, that there are some circumstances in the present controversy which appear to me to justify, and indeed to require, strong language. There are many points in the system itself of our opponents, which it is impossible too strongly to denounce and reprobate. The means also by which that system has been enforced and recommended, are such as to require grave reprehension. Our opponents appear to me like men who, thinking that a great change is needed in the views and practices of their Church, endeavour, by explaining away its formularies, and bringing forward a few isolated passages from the works of some of its great divines, to persuade people that it is no change at all; for while they admit and bewail the fact, that their system has been nowhere and at no time put in practice in our Church, they persist in calling it the Anglican system. They must not then be surprised if this (however well intentioned) is not considered plain and fair dealing. Nor can I help adding, that the anonymous publications of the party more particularly are, many of them, characterized by a self-complacent spirit,

and scornful tone towards their opponents, such as intimate, more plainly than words could do, that the only possible reason for men not holding the views of the Tractators must be sheer ignorance ; a spirit and tone which, I will venture to say, the degree of learning and research shown in those productions renders worse than ridiculous. These are circumstances that would well justify strong language. We are far from disputing the piety or the learning of the Tractators, but (let us not conceal from ourselves the fact) neither can we dispute the piety or learning of many others who have at various times misled portions of the Church. Such recommendations, then, are wholly insufficient as proofs of the truth of their doctrines. These evidences are to be found with many different parties. The question, therefore, must be determined by an impartial investigation, in which all prejudices derived from such sources must be laid aside. To enable the reader to conduct such an inquiry, is the object of the following work ; and thankful indeed shall I be, if it shall tend to bring back into the old paths of our Church any who have been misled, or preserve any who are in danger of being misled, by the specious arguments and plausible statements of the Tractators. I commend it humbly to His blessing who alone can make it instrumental to the good of His Church.

WILLIAM GOODE.

London,
November 20, 1841.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE word of God, however conveyed to us, binds the conscience to the reception of whatever it may deliver. Every statement that has competent evidence of its divine origin, written or unwritten, demands our faith and obedience. There is no room in such a case for doubt or inquiry. All that we have to consider is, What is delivered? and what is delivered is to be received upon the affirmation of its Divine Author.

It is evident, then, that in the case of a revelation that includes much that is mysterious and beyond the power of man fully to comprehend, this implicit belief in the doctrines it reveals, involves a complete surrender of the mind to the truth so delivered, such a surrender as is due only to divine revelation, and not to be given to anything that comes under that name without sufficient *evidence* of its divine origin. The higher the authority conceded to divine revelation, so much the more does all that comes to us under such a designation demand our investigation as to the evidence for its divine origin. The more completely we are left to lean upon the intrinsic value of the divine testimony as the alone ground of our belief, from the mysteriousness of the truths revealed, the more are we bound to sift the evidence for its *being* a *divine* testimony.

For in such matters we are very easily misled. In the doctrines of religion we have no internal monitor able to discern truth from error. And hence he who is willing to receive as divine that which comes to him under such a name, but with insufficient evidence of its divine origin, is at the mercy of every impostor or enthusiast he may meet with.

Moreover, if God has given us a revelation, and requires of us as *individuals* a reception of the truths and precepts he has revealed for our everlasting salvation, then does it especially con-

cern us *as individuals* to look to the evidences of that which comes to us with the profession of being his word, that we may separate the wheat from the chaff, and not be misled in matters affecting our eternal interests. This, I say, it becomes us to do as *individuals*, because we are to be judged by God *individually*; and if we have possessed the opportunities of knowledge, it will be no plea in bar of judgment that the church or body to which we belonged taught us error, for even death may be awarded us under such circumstances, though our blood be required of those who have misled us. (See Ezekiel iii. 18, 20. &c.)

This our responsibility to God as *individuals*, it is most important for us to keep in view, because it shows us the indispensable necessity of ascertaining, to the satisfaction of our own minds, that it is *divine* testimony upon which we are relying in support of what we hold as the doctrines of Christianity. Then only are we safe; for if our reliance is placed upon anything else, we immediately lay ourselves open to error. He who embraces even a true doctrine on insufficient grounds, exposes himself to the admission of false doctrine on similar grounds. And it is more easy and pleasant to build on a false foundation than the true one, for the former has no certain limits, which the latter has. The whole superstructure of Romanism¹ has been erected on a few false principles admitted as the foundation. And belief founded upon a false foundation or insufficient grounds is generally but weak and wavering; and if it be shaken, true and false doctrine fall together.

Hence it is of essential moment to us to ascertain what we possess that can be called divine revelation on the subject of religion, for to it, whatever it may be, our *rule of faith* must be limited.

We here take the phrase, "*Rule of faith*," it will be observed, as referring only to "the faith once delivered to the saints," the truths of Christianity, the Christian religion, which is its usual meaning in theology. Other matters may be objects of faith, as—to cite the most important example—that the Scriptures are the word of God: but these do not enter into "the faith." And I make the remark here, in order to put the reader upon his guard against the cavil that the Scripture is not the complete rule of faith, because it does not testify of itself as a whole that it is the word of God; whereas this is a matter totally distinct from that which we are considering, viz. whether "the faith," the

¹ I use the words Romanism and Romanist, Popery and Papist, without any wish to speak offensively to those so designated, and see no reason why they who practically identify the Church of Rome with the Catholic Church, and make the Pope Christ's Vicar, should be offended at such terms. I use them merely for the sake of brevity.

Christian religion, is not fully contained in the Scripture, and that the Scripture is our only divine informant respecting it.

The *rule of faith*, then, may be briefly described as that which God has delivered respecting religion; and if we inquire as to the extent and limits of that rule *to us*, we have simply to determine the extent and limits of that which we have sufficient grounds for believing to be divine revelation on the subject. For the doctrines of religion, excepting those which are made manifest by the works of God, can be known only by divine revelation: none but God has a right to be heard in this matter. Faith in them, therefore, must have what it believes to be testimony that has a divine source and authority as a foundation to rest upon. They are not matters that are to be proved by argument, but to be received from God. Faith in a mathematical truth may be produced by argument, and rests ultimately upon certain self-evident truths. Faith in the inspiration, &c. of Scripture may rest upon grounds which derive their force from approving themselves to human reason. Faith in the doctrine of Christianity rests upon the word of God. The Christian religion is a revelation from God. Faith (as connected with our present subject) is a belief in that revelation, and a belief in it on the authority of Him who has revealed it. And therefore the sole object of faith is that which is revealed to us, be it more or less; and any abstract inquiry as to what must be the necessary extent of such revelation is both out of place and irreverent, for all we have to do is thankfully to accept what God has given us.

Our *rule of faith*, therefore, is the whole of that testimony we possess respecting religion which we can prove to have a divine source and authority. By that testimony *our* faith is to be *directed* and *measured*; and therefore it is properly called our *rule of faith*.

I need hardly add, that the same testimony, being our only divine testimony, must be our only *divine* rule of *practice* in our religious duties; though it must be observed that in the two cases there is this difference, that while all the doctrines of religion must have express divine testimony to rest upon, so that the rule of faith is strictly limited to that which has such testimony, inasmuch as no human witness on such a point is a sufficient foundation for faith, there may, nevertheless, be religious duties prescribed by human authority under that power which God has given to the church in his word for the decent ordering of his service. Such at least is the doctrine of our church, and in this she differs from most of the sects who have departed from her communion; which does not, however, prevent her from admitting, that those only are *intrinsically* necessary that are prescribed by the divine rule itself. And in the exercise of this

power our church wisely retains many of those rites and usages which ecclesiastical tradition has handed down to us as having been very generally observed in the church in primitive times, thinking, as Hooker says, when speaking of those "traditions" which our church receives, "that traditions ecclesiastical are not rudely and in gross to be shaken off, because the inventors of them were men."¹

In matters of *faith*, therefore, the divine rule is our *sole* authoritative rule; in matters of *practice* there may be added to those which are prescribed by the divine rule, by the authority which Christ has left with his church for the direction of its rites and services, such as are necessary to the maintenance of peace and order.

Moreover, belief as to the divine origin of any testimony claiming to be received as a divine revelation, must be grounded upon evidence satisfactory to our reason. For faith, if it be worth the name, must have sufficient ground to rest upon. And therefore, as faith in the truths delivered by what is *acknowledged* to be divine revelation has the best of all possible grounds to rest upon, even in those that are above human reason, viz. the Divine Word, so belief that Scripture is a divine revelation has ample evidence to rest upon, such as commends itself to human reason, and leaves him inexcusable who does not receive it in that character.

This, then, is our present subject. We are inquiring where *the divine, or divinely revealed, rule of faith and practice*, is to be found, and what are the extent and limits of that rule; that is, in fact, what are the extent and limits of that which we have sufficient ground for considering to be divine revelation?

In the future consideration of the subject we shall direct our attention more particularly to that part of it which concerns the rule of faith, that not only being the most important, but in fact to a considerable extent including the other in its determination, for in both cases the sole question to be determined is, what certain depository or infallible teacher of divine revelation we possess; adding, in the course of the inquiry, whatever may seem requisite on the latter point.

It is admitted on all hands, by all who bear the Christian name, that the first and great revelation of the doctrines of Christianity was made by our Lord and his apostles, and that what they delivered on the subject of religion is to be received as a divine revelation.

I will venture to add that it has been the general belief of the best and purest part of the church in all ages, that our Lord and

¹ Eccl. Pol. book v. c. 65.

his apostles could alone be looked upon as the certain and publicly accredited organs through which any divine revelation has been received by us on the subject. There are no doubt dissentients to this doctrine. There have been in the church, at various times, enthusiasts, who have pretended to have received additional revelations of divine truth. There are those who consider that the decrees of certain councils of the church, at which a great number of bishops have been present, are to be received as beyond doubt the determinations of the Holy Spirit, binding the conscience of every man to belief as an immediate divine testimony. But these are notions with which on the present occasion we need not concern ourselves. Our task lies with those who embrace the notion that, with the exception of course of the Old Testament, all doctrines claiming our belief must be traceable to our Lord and his apostles.

This is held to be the case by most of the Romanists themselves. Thus the Jesuit Fisher, in his answer to White, says—"The church, even to the world's end, must be founded on the apostles, and believe nothing as matter of faith besides that which was delivered of them." (Rejoinder to White, p. 51.) And the same is stated in the strongest terms by Holden.¹

We have, then, to determine the limits of the divine revelation we can ascertain to have come down to us from them.

Here, again, it is generally admitted that the most sacred record of this revelation is to be found in the Holy Scriptures.

But it cannot be denied that when the apostles were delivering to men that divine revelation with which they were charged, they delivered it by word of mouth as well as in the writings that have come down to us, and that they *first* delivered it orally, and afterwards penned the writing they have left us. The question, then, for our determination is this, Whether we have any record or witness of their *oral* teaching, such as can be received by us as a divine revelation supplementary to, and interpretative of, the writings they have left us.

This is, in few words, the question we are now about to discuss.

A small party has lately arisen in the Church of England who have, with the Romanists, asserted the affirmative of this question, and maintain that we have, in the works of those who came after the apostles, a *certain* record in many points of the substance of their oral teaching, and that such is the doctrine of the primitive Fathers, and of the Church of England. We maintain the negative, and maintain our view to be that of most, to say the least, of the primitive Fathers, and of the Church of

¹ Div. fid. Analys. lib. i. c. 8, lect. iii. § 2, p. 95. Paris, 1767.

England to which we belong, and which we venerate and revere as the apostolical church of this country. This, I say, is the *main* question we have to discuss here, though, as will readily be conceived, there are other important questions connected with it, and arising out of it, which necessarily enter into the discussion.

This supposed supplementary record of inspired teaching is called by the somewhat loose and indefinite name of *tradition*, or sometimes *apostolical tradition*, a name which is very calculated to mislead the uninitiated reader, who is ready to suppose that he who refuses to receive "apostolical tradition" must be wanting in the respect due to the apostles. Nay, the charge is made by those from whom one might least have expected it. We shall therefore make a few remarks upon the word *tradition* before we proceed further, in order to show the diverse and arbitrary senses in which it is used by theologians, and remove, if possible, the difficulties thus created in the way of the general reader.

This word literally means only a delivery, or thing delivered, from one person to another, and that in any way; so that it is equally applicable to what is delivered in writing as to that which is delivered orally as Bellarmine himself states,¹ and so it is used in the Scripture;² and also by the Fathers.³

But at other times it is used by the Fathers,⁴ as well as modern writers, to signify that which was delivered *orally*, in *contradistinction* to what was delivered *by writing*.

It has also been used to signify a report that has passed through

¹ Nomen traditionis generale est, et significat omnem doctrinam sive scriptam sive non scriptam quæ ab uno communicatur alteri. BELLARM. De. verb. Dei lib. iv. c. 2.

² "Hold the traditions (της παραδίδως) which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." 2 Thess. ii. 15.

³ Thus Gregory Nyssen uses the words, "the evangelical and apostolical traditions," (εὐαγγελικαὶ τε καὶ ἀποστολικαὶ παραδίδωσι,) to express the books of the New Testament. De Virg. c. xi. ed. 1615, tom. ii. p. 579. So Tertullian, after referring to various passages of the New Testament which Marcion wished to expunge, says, "Believe what is delivered (tradited)." Credo quod traditum est. De carne Christi, c. ii. ed. 1664, p. 308; and so elsewhere he says, "An et traditio nisi scripta non debeat recipi." (De Cor. c. iii. ib. p. 101.) So Hippolytus the Martyr, after having quoted various passages from the New Testament, and pointed them out as amply sufficient to teach the truth he was inculcating, says, "Let us therefore, my dear brethren, believe according to the tradition of the apostles, (κατὰ τὴν παραδίδωσιν τῶν ἀποστόλων)." Contr. Noët. §. 17. ed. Fabr. vol. ii. p. 18. Many others might be added; but we shall have occasion to refer to this point again.

⁴ Ταῦτα τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν περικυλισμένων δογμάτων καὶ κυριγμάτων, τὰ μὴ καὶ τῆς ὑγραφοῦ διδασκαλίας ἔχουσιν, τὰ δὲ καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων παραδίδωσις διαδίδωται ἡμῖν ἐν μυστηρίῳ πατερικῶν. BASIL. M. De Spir. S. c. 27. ed. Bened. vol. iii. p. 54.

Τὰ μὴ ἐν γραφικῇ, τὰ σὲν παραδίδωσιν περιέχοντα οἱ ἄγιοι ἀπόστολοι. EPIPHAN. Adv. her. in her. 61. ed. Petav. vol. i. p. 511.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

several hands from one to another of that which was *orally* by its first author;¹ and this is the sense—a *technical* sense—in which it is used by our opponents, and is indeed in common use, to signify a report coming to us through the Fathers of what was delivered orally by the apostles.

It is also often used to signify that which was *first* delivered by the early church, and does not trace its origin to the apostles, that is, in ritual matters, sometimes alone and sometimes with the word “ecclesiastical” attached to it; and hence the term “apostolical tradition” has been used to distinguish that which *claimed* an apostolical origin from that which *professed* to originate with others; but the distinction is not usually observed, for this “apostolical tradition” has been called, and more correctly, both by ancient and modern authors, ecclesiastical or patristical tradition, as we shall show presently; and indeed, the phrase “apostolical tradition” is seldom used by the ancients in the technical sense of the word “tradition” just mentioned, but generally to signify *the apostolical epistles*.

It has also been used by modern writers to signify *the mode of conveyance* by which a doctrine or rite so made known to us has been brought down.²

This variety of signification necessarily creates much confusion, and occasions many difficulties to the general reader, and has enabled the Romanists and our opponents to avail themselves of many passages of the Fathers, as if they were favourable to their views, which in fact are not so, but the contrary.

When modern writers, however, speak of “*tradition*” in reference to *doctrine*, it is usually meant to refer to *that which purports or is claimed to be the substance of the oral teaching of the apostles conveyed to us through those who came after them*. The word, when used in reference to *doctrine*, is limited to the teaching of the *apostles*, because it is *generally* agreed, that it is from them only that the doctrines of Christianity can be received. But when applied to rites and ceremonies, it is often taken (as we have just intimated) to *include* the patristical report of the ordinances of the primitive church, as it appears to be in our 34th Article, where it is said, that it “is not necessary that *traditions* and ceremonies be in all places one and utterly

¹ It seems to be used in this sense by Irenæus, when he says, “Evenit itaque, neque scripturis jam neque traditioni consentire eos.” Adv. hæ. lib. iii. c. 2. p. 200. ed. Grab.

² The Greeks generally used the word διαδοχή, to denote *the mode of conveyance* in such a case, and παραδίδαι only for the thing delivered, as in the following passage of Epiphanius, τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς παραδόσεως ἐν αὐτῇ διαδοχῇ καὶ ἡμῶς παραλαβόμεν. Adv. Hæ. in hæ. 33. ed. Petav. vol. i. p. 222.

like," &c. where the whole Article evidently shows that the word is used to signify chiefly, if not solely, ecclesiastical rites derived from ancient ecclesiastical sanction.

The next question, then, to be considered is how this oral apostolical tradition is supposed to be ascertainable. Our opponents refer us to the consentient teaching of the Fathers, or what they call the *catholic consent of the early church*, so that in fact, *strictly speaking*, what they call "tradition," "apostolical tradition," is *patristical tradition*, or at best the *patristical report of oral apostolical tradition*.

Such testimony they think could not exist in favour of a doctrine or interpretation, unless that doctrine or interpretation had been delivered by the apostles, whether or not it be directly attributed to the oral teaching of the apostles by those who deliver it. And thus "tradition," "apostolical tradition," and "catholic consent," are with them *practically* convertible terms. Such at least is the ground upon which they generally argue, though, as we shall show hereafter, they are sometimes forced into concessions not quite consistent with this view.

In this agree with them (as we shall see hereafter) the principal divines of the Church of Rome, though there have, no doubt, been some in that church who have held it to be in possession of a body of apostolical teaching, some of which may never have been written, communicated orally by its pastors from one to another through successive ages, so as not to be tied down to what the Fathers have delivered, and which its priests deliver to the people in every age as far as they may see fit; but the former is the ground taken by the more learned divines of that church, who always refer us to the Fathers for proof of what they pretend to derive from the oral teaching of the apostles.

It would therefore, as it appears to me, obviate much confusion in treating this subject, if the word *tradition* was used in its proper meaning, and an epithet affixed to it, denoting the *acknowledged* author. And thus, when we spoke of Apostolical tradition, Patristical tradition, Popish tradition, &c., we should understand by each, that which we all acknowledge to have been delivered by the Apostles, the Fathers, the Romanists, &c. And so the Fathers often, perhaps generally, used the term; for not only did they use the phrase, "the tradition of the apostles," or "apostolical tradition," to denote Scripture, but also "the tradition of the Fathers," or "patristical tradition," to denote that which is now called apostolical tradition.²

Strictly speaking, indeed, that only is any man's tradition to

² Thus Basil speaks of "the accurate observance of the patristical traditions," (*ἡ ἀκριβὴς τήρησις τῶν πατρικῶν παραδόσεων*.) Ep. 243. § 2. ed. Bened. vol. iii. p.

us, which he himself has delivered to us, either by writing or orally; and therefore, in the case of those who lived at a remote period, their tradition to us can only be their written tradition, and we can receive the oral tradition of those only with whom we can personally communicate; for it is not pretended that oral communications can be handed down verbally, and consequently it is at most only the *substance* of what was delivered that is re-delivered, and therefore not precisely the tradition of the first author, and this, in abstruse doctrinal points, may make all the difference.

The oral tradition of the apostles, therefore, *strictly speaking*, was enjoyed by those only to whom it was actually delivered by the apostles. We can only have the *report* of that tradition made by others. And to call that report by a name that strictly belongs only to Scripture,—*apostolical tradition*,—necessarily creates confusion; for in the one case it applies to the acknowledged words of the apostles, and in the other only to the report made by others of their substance, and moreover assumes what is questioned, viz. that that report is indubitably correct. This confusion is no doubt extremely useful to the Romanists and our opponents, because it throws a cloud over their statements, which often enables them to escape with impunity under its cover, when the light of clearer phraseology would have exposed them to much inconvenience. But, as our object is to clear this whole matter to the reader, we shall not make use of terms that *assume the very point in question*.

A more accurate statement of the views of our opponents, then, would be this,—that *patristical tradition* (which to us, is, what the Fathers have delivered in their writings,) is under certain circumstances an indubitably correct representation of the oral tradition of the apostles to their first followers.

Being borne out, therefore, by the Scripture and many passages of the Fathers, I shall, to avoid ambiguity, use the word *tradition* in its strict and proper sense, and not the technical sense that has often been affixed to it; for nothing tends so much to perspicuity as the use of words in their natural and proper significations; and I shall therefore call the testimony to which our opponents appeal, by its proper name of *patristical* or *ecclesiastical* tradition; not understanding by those phrases a tradition of *all* the Fathers or *the whole church*, (of which we can have no *evidence or proof*, and therefore have no right to talk

373. And after delivering the doctrine relating to our Lord's human nature, he says, "These are the mysteries of the Church, these the tradition of the Fathers," (*ταῦτα τὰ μυστήρια αἱ παραδόσεις*.) Ep. 261. § 3. ib. p. 403. And elsewhere, (if at least the passage is genuine,) De Sp. S. c. 30. § 79. Ed. Ben. tom. iii. p. 67.

about,) but a tradition of *certain* Fathers or a certain *portion*, greater or less, of the church.

There are two remarks also, which I would offer to the reader, upon the common use of this term, by way of caution.

The first is, that he must be very careful when estimating the value of the testimonies adduced by our opponents in favour of their views from antient authors, to ascertain what those authors meant by the "tradition" of which they are speaking; for the word is continually used by them, as we have already intimated, in reference to the Scriptures of the apostles,—a fact which the Romanists and our opponents seem to be very little acquainted with, or at least put out of sight.

Thus we frequently meet in the Fathers, as in the instance referred to above, with the phrase "the Evangelical tradition," meaning that which has been delivered by the Evangelists in the Gospels,—a want of acquaintance with which fact has caused one of our opponents to make the mistake of applying a passage from Athanasius in a sense *precisely contrary to its true meaning*, (as we shall point out hereafter,)—and "the Apostolical tradition," meaning that which has been delivered in one of the Apostolical epistles.

The second is, ever to remember that when the terms "tradition," "apostolical tradition," are used by our opponents, that which is so spoken of is traceable by us only to the *report* of the oral teaching of the apostles, given by *others*, and which, *at the best*, rests upon the evidence to be found in certain writings of the Fathers that happen to remain to us, and moreover is delivered, for the most part to say the least, without any claim to its being derived from the oral teaching of the apostles. This is a fact so obvious, that it would be hardly necessary to notice it, but for the circumstance that our opponents continually reason as if it was denied that the oral teaching of the apostles was of equal authority with their writings, and tell us that it is "*apostolical* tradition" only to which they defer; when, in fact, as to the authority of the oral teaching of the apostles, and the deference due to *apostolical* tradition, that is, what the apostles really delivered, all are agreed; and the sole question is, whether we have anything besides the Scriptures for which the title of apostolical tradition can be justly claimed in any proper sense of the words. We are all agreed that apostolical tradition, that is, what the apostles delivered respecting the doctrines of Christianity, is a fit and proper foundation for our faith. Indeed there can hardly be any division of sentiment upon such a subject in the Christian world. All are ready to receive with reverence whatever the apostles delivered. But the question is, where that apostolical tradition is to be found. We say that the only

record of it upon which we can fully depend is the Scripture. Our opponents contend that in the writings that remain to us of the early church there is to be found another record of it upon which we can *also* fully depend. The very question at issue, then, is, whether any patristical testimony to be found in these writings can be considered as an *authoritative* record of the oral teaching of the apostles. To represent it, therefore, as being, in the strict sense of the terms, *apostolical* tradition, and represent us as unwilling to receive the *oral* teaching of the apostles, is to take an unfair advantage of the reader, to assume the very point in question. It is a report of it delivered by men uninspired, and liable to error and mistake in transmitting the doctrines of the oral teaching which they heard. The Holy Scriptures may justly be called apostolical tradition. But as to the oral tradition or teaching of the apostles, it is evident that, however infallible it may be in itself, we can only have a *fallible* report of it through *fallible* men, and that, in fact, the report we do possess of it is very imperfect, and on many accounts open to just suspicion. And hence it is clear, that when any who lived long after the apostles are said to be taught anything or to judge of anything by apostolical tradition, the phrase "apostolical tradition," either must mean the Scriptures which the apostles have left, or is applied in a limited sense; for if it is applied to anything but Holy Scripture, it refers to the patristical report of apostolical teaching; and the reader who keeps this in view will at once see the ground on which he stands, that it is the ground of human and not divine authority.

And if this is observed, the phrase "apostolical tradition," may be used without danger, as describing the *author* to whom what is delivered is *attributed*, to distinguish it from *ecclesiastical* or *patristical* tradition, where no higher author of the doctrine delivered is *claimed* than the church or the Fathers, and thus in fact the phrase is often used; but any argument derived from this use of the name, as if the apostolicity of the doctrine was thereby necessarily conceded by those who use this phrase, is manifestly absurd. To avoid mistake, however, we shall adhere to the phrase *patristical tradition*.

Though our opponents, therefore, intimate their claim to the high-sounding title of "the Apostolicals," we cannot but think that it seems more justly to belong to those who are satisfied with the undoubted remains of the apostles, than to those who wish to add to them from the writings of the Fathers, who (as we all profess to follow the apostles) might rather be called "the Patristicals." However, the name need not alarm us, when we recollect that it was the name assumed by one of the early *heresirs*; and one, by the way, which among other (supposed apostolical)

notions was particularly severe against marriage, and those who lapsed after baptism.

Another remark which I would here offer is, that we draw a wide distinction between the value of the testimony of the Fathers as to doctrines and the oral teaching of the apostles, and their testimony as to those matters of fact that came under their immediate cognizance. It is important to keep this in view, because the value of human testimony is very different in one of those cases to what it is in the other. The value of a man's testimony *to a fact that takes place under his own eye, or to a matter that is the object of the senses*, is very different to that of his report of an oral statement, especially with respect to matters of doctrine. And this is a truth so obvious and generally acknowledged, that the report of a communication from another, relating even to a matter of fact, would not be received in a court of justice, so conscious are men of the uncertainties attending such evidence. How much more uncertainty, then, attends the reports of communications of this nature when relating to such matters as the abstruse and controverted points of Christian doctrine? However infallible those may be who make the communication, the imperfection and fallibility of the reporters necessarily throw a degree of uncertainty over the report, especially where it has passed through many hands, and where a slight misapprehension on the part of the hearer, or the change of a word, might alter the complexion of the whole. Hence the sole reason why we receive the apostolical accounts of our Lord's doctrine as entitled to our faith, is because we hold the apostles to have delivered those accounts under divine guidance. Should we have received them as entitled to our implicit faith had they been delivered by uninspired men?

Hence the attempt has been made by our opponents to confound doctrines and facts together, and to make it appear that evidence which is valid with respect to the latter must be equally valid with respect to the former, by urging that it is a mere question of fact whether the apostles or the primitive church did or did not teach certain doctrines, and therefore that human testimony to such a fact is as valid as the same testimony to any other fact. But the inference is evidently most unwarranted; for it is a similar question of fact whether the Scriptures do or do not teach certain doctrines, but men misunderstanding the Scriptures give different accounts of this fact, which is an evident proof that their testimony in such a case is not wholly to be relied upon. Again, it is a fact that there is a Christian Episcopal Church in England, and it is a fact that that church proposes certain doctrines to her members in the thirty-nine Articles, and the testimony of our opponents to the existence of that church

might be a very sufficient proof of such fact to those in other countries, while their testimony as to what doctrines were maintained by her might be considered a very insufficient proof. Indeed this argument is altogether founded upon a misuse of terms, because what is meant by a matter of fact here is a matter that *originally* falls under the cognizance of the senses, as distinguished from that which is merely an object of mental contemplation.

We draw, therefore, a wide distinction between the value of patristical testimony as to ritual matters and such points, and its value in certifying us as to the oral teaching of the apostles, or the whole primitive church; not to dwell here upon the fact that we have but little *direct* testimony as to what that teaching was. Thus the testimony of a few reputable authors may be sufficient to prove the fact of the practice of infant baptism in the primitive church, (and we shall show hereafter the use of such testimony with respect to doctrines immediately connected with the rites and usages of the church,) but not to prove what the doctrine of the apostles or the whole primitive church was, as to the nature and effects of that sacrament.

Moreover, even as to matters of fact, we must observe that a distinction is to be drawn between those for which we have the testimony of an eye-witness, and those for which we have only testimony derived from the report of others. We shall find hereafter that even in such points as the duration of our Lord's public ministry, and the period of life at which he suffered, statements directly opposed to the truth might pass under the name of apostolical tradition, with the sanction of such respectable names as Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria; and therefore even as to these matters, where the report comes through several hands, we must not wholly rely upon the testimony of one or two authors, of whatever repute.

It is true, our opponents endeavour to make up for the obvious uncertainty attendant upon such testimony, by limiting it to that which is universal or established by what they call *catholic consent*; but, as we shall hereafter see, their alleged universality and catholic consent are mere words and not realities, for errors and heresies existed in the church from the very first, and (to name no other objection) the testimony we have for the first few centuries is derived from documents wholly insufficient to prove catholic consent. On this point, however, we shall have occasion to speak more at large in another place.

Another point which I would request the reader to observe is, that when speaking of the Holy Scripture as the only certain depository or teacher of divine revelation, and the sole *Rule of faith*, we apply the words in the strict sense of the terms, as implying that which binds the conscience to the reception of what-

ever it may deliver, not as signifying that it is the only *guide* to the truth. There are many useful *guides* to the truth besides the Scriptures, of which the writings of the early Fathers form one, and an important one.

It is very necessary to keep this distinction in view, because the advocates for "tradition" often catch an unwary reader by speaking as if their opponents had *no* regard, *no* respect for the writings of the primitive church; whereas, they may be, and have been, held in high estimation as guides in our search after the truths of religion, by many who reject them as forming part of the rule of faith, or giving an authoritative testimony respecting the doctrines of Christianity.

There has been much very extraordinary misrepresentation upon this point in the writings of our opponents, against which I would here at the outset caution the reader. Language has been used implying that all those who do not take their views hold the Fathers in utter contempt, and look upon the great lights of the primitive church only with scorn, and they are held up to public derision under the name of "*ultra-protestants*." Such language is wholly unjustifiable, and reflects discredit only upon those who use it. The hasty and ignorant remarks of individuals who know nothing of the Fathers are not to be charged upon a whole body of men for the purpose of bringing their sentiments into disrepute. It may be convenient in controversy to impute to your adversary extreme views, and is often an argument very effectual with the popular mind, which generally inclines to extremes. But it is merely throwing dust in the eyes of the reader to blind him to the real question. Our opponents must be quite aware that there are multitudes of those who differ from them, who have no sympathy with men who talk contemptuously of antiquity and the early Fathers.

We believe that our Lord has had a church upon earth ever since his first advent, and that we have among the records of antiquity many valuable works penned by his true followers; and that the writings and records of the primitive church may be, on various grounds and in many ways, useful in guiding us to a knowledge of the truth, and more especially in guarding us against error. Nay, we are ready to admit that a notion put forward as an important article of faith which finds no support in any of those writings, is thereby convicted of error, and thus that in the refutation of heresy and error those writings are of great value.

We hold also that the consent of many of the most able and pious ecclesiastical writers of antiquity (and what is called *catholic consent* is nothing more than this) in favour of any particular view of divine truth, is an *argument of great force* in de-

fence of that view, not from the improbable possibility of such consent having been derived from the oral teaching of the apostles, but rather from the probable evidence afforded by such consent, (as one of themselves, Theodoret, will tell us,) that they were all under the guidance of one and the same omniscient Spirit, whose teaching renders all those to whom it is vouchsafed valuable guides to the church at large in all ages. "Immense mountains and seas," says Theodoret, after showing the identity of the testimony of several of the earliest Fathers upon certain important points, "separate them one from another, but the distance has not injured their harmony. For *they were all taught by the same spiritual grace.*"¹

Further, we do not deny that any man who differs from the true catholic church of Christ in fundamental points, must be in fatal error, and that the faith of that church in such points must in all ages be the same; we do not deny that there may have been fuller communications made by the apostles to some of their first followers on some points than we find in the Scriptures they have left us; we do not deny the *possibility* that interpretations of Scripture brought to us through the Fathers may have originally emanated from the apostles; we do not deny, but on the contrary firmly maintain, that the true orthodox faith, in at least all fundamental points, is to be found in the writings of the primitive Fathers, and therefore that it is very necessary that in all such points our faith be such as can find support in their writings: but the question is, whether there is sufficient evidence of the divine origin of any thing but Scripture to entitle it to authority over the conscience as a divine revelation; whether in the testimony of the Fathers there is to be found any thing which, either in form or in substance, we are bound to receive as the Word of God delivered to the church by the apostles, and consequently forming part of our *divinely revealed Rule of faith and duty*. This is the real question, and this question we answer in the negative. We assert that there is no sufficient evidence of the divine origin of any thing but Scripture; and "tradition" is on many accounts not sufficiently trustworthy to be received as a divine informant. Our opponents, with the Papists, maintain the affirmative, and assert that patristical testimony may, under certain circumstances, be taken as a "practically infallible" representative of the oral teaching of the apostles, and that we do in fact possess, in the patristical writings that have come down to us, a testimony respecting certain doctrines and interpretations of Scripture and other points, so indubitably of apostolic origin as to bind the conscience to the reception of it as part of the Divine Rule.

¹ See testimony of Theodoret in ch. 10 below.

There is one more observation which I would here at the outset offer to the reader, and that is, that our great concern in treating this subject will be to point out the *facts* of the case, and make them the ground for our conclusions. Speculative arguments have been adduced on the question on both sides, which, however plausible they may appear to the general reader, are far from being trustworthy. Thus the advocates for the exclusive authority of the Scripture have often urged that the Scriptures being given by God for the instruction of mankind in religion, they must be perfect for the accomplishment of the purpose for which they were given, and therefore must contain all that has been revealed for that purpose. But it does not follow that, because the Scriptures were given for that purpose, they are necessarily all that has been given. It is here *assumed* that the end they were designed to answer was the instruction of mankind in *the whole* of divine revelation. This our opponents deny, and assert that we have inspired testimony on the subject of religion over and above what is contained in the Scriptures, and that consequently, though the Scriptures may be, and no doubt are perfect for the end for which they were given, they form only a portion of God's gift for the direction of man in religion. So, on the other hand, there are those who support the views of our opponents, who urge the *necessity* of having some inspired or practically infallible testimony to appeal to for the interpretation of the Scriptures and the decision of controversies in important points, in order to preserve peace in the church, and that God would not have left his church without such a help; which is the old Popish argument for the supremacy of the Pope, and serves as well for that hypothesis as the one before us, and is evidently founded upon a mere human speculation as to what would be suitable to the Divine character and convenient to us. It might be very convenient for us to have such a judge of controversies, and the most convenient of all would be an individual judge in the centre of the church to act as Christ's vicar; but the question is, What are the facts of the case? It is not for us to determine what the character of God seems to us to render it likely that he would give, nor what we might think convenient and desirable, but what God *has* given us.

And in such a matter we are bound not to surrender our reason to the dictum of any man or body of men, but with humility, with a mind open to conviction and bent only upon arriving at the truth, to investigate the evidence upon which a claim set up in behalf of any testimony as a divine informant rests.

The great object of the following work, then, is to demonstrate, in opposition to the view just stated, that there is nothing of which we have sufficient evidence that it is divine or inspired

testimony but the Holy Scripture; and consequently that the Holy Scripture is our sole and exclusive Divine Rule of faith and practice.

Before, however, we proceed further, we shall in the next chapter show what are the precise views of our opponents as stated by themselves.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOCTRINE OF DR. PUSEY, MR. KEBLE, MR. NEWMAN, AND THE
 "TRACTS FOR THE TIMES," ON THE SUBJECT OF PATRISTICAL TRADI-
 TION, AND POINTS CONNECTED THEREWITH, WITH SOME GENERAL
 OBSERVATIONS ON THEIR STATEMENTS.

THE writers to whom I alluded more particularly when speaking of the views that have been lately advanced among us on the subject of "tradition," are those whose names are prefixed to this chapter. I am not, I believe, saying more than they have themselves avowed, when I state that, besides the works published in their own names, they are the principal writers and compilers of the Tracts entitled "Tracts for the Times, by Members of the University of Oxford." Mr. Newman has also published among other works, "Lectures on Romanism and Popular Protestantism," in which the doctrinal system he advocates on the subject of "tradition," church authority and the right of private judgment, is somewhat elaborately laid down. Mr. Keble has also published a Sermon on "Primitive Tradition," to the third edition of which is added an Appendix, containing further proofs and illustrations of his argument, and a Catena Patrum from Divines of the English Church, alleged to be favourable to his views. The views of Dr. Pusey on this subject are very pithily laid down in his "Earnest Remonstrance to the Author of the Pope's Letter;" reprinted as No. 77 of the "Tracts for the Times."

Before I proceed further, therefore, I am desirous of placing distinctly before the reader the views advanced in these works on the subject of patristical tradition; views for the refutation of which this work is more especially intended.

I speak with deliberation when I say, that a system so completely opposed to the views of the whole stream of our most able English divines from the Reformation to the present day, as that laid down in the above works, never saw the light. Incidental observations *tending* to Romish views have no doubt been thrown out at times by various divines of our church, particularly

among the extreme section of the Nonjurors, as, for instance, Brett, Dodwell, &c., men notoriously standing in a very inconsiderable minority in the church, but *now referred to by these writers as expressing her views in such points*; a circumstance worthy of notice in determining how far the system now put forward is entitled to the high names so confidently claimed for it, of Catholicism and Anglicanism.

I begin with Mr. Newman, whose views on this subject are propounded in his "Lectures on Romanism and popular Protestantism," from which work I have made the following extracts, arranging them so as to present to the reader (with, at least in the intention, scrupulous fidelity) a compendious view of the whole doctrine of Mr. Newman on the subject.

With respect to the Holy Scripture, then, it is granted by Mr. Newman, *in words*, that it *contains* all the essential and fundamental articles of the faith, "all things necessary to salvation;" "the saving faith," (p. 228, &c.); but it is not "the only ground of the faith," (p. 369,) nor "the source of all religious truth whatever," (p. 370,) but there is another "ground of the faith," and also need of something else to teach us those truths of religion which are not contained there.

The other "ground of the faith" and "source of religious truth," is considered to be "*tradition*" and these two [i. e. "the Bible and Catholic Tradition,"] together make up a joint rule, [i. e. of faith,] (p. 327.)

With respect to "*tradition*,"—

It is held that there is a Divine word left unwritten by the apostles contained in the writings of the Fathers, so surely preserved, that "whatever explanations the Protestant makes in behalf of the preservation of the written word, will be found applicable in the theory to the unwritten," (p. 46,) that "we have as little warrant for rejecting antient consent as for rejecting Scripture itself," (p. 325) that "catholic tradition," is a *divine* informant in religious matters," (p. 329,) "the unwritten word," p. 355.

This unwritten word is "antient consent," (p. 325,) often spoken of under the name of "antiquity;" "we agree with the Romanist in appealing to Antiquity as *our great teacher*," (p. 47,) the meaning of which is thus stated: "Let us understand what is meant by saying that antiquity is of authority in religious questions. Both Romanists and ourselves maintain as follows:—that whatever doctrine the primitive ages unanimously attest, whether by consent of Fathers, or by councils, or by the events of history, or by controversies, or in whatever way, whatever may fairly and reasonably be considered to be the universal belief of those ages, is to be received as *coming from the apostles*." (p. 62; see also

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tion," or "unwritten word," is
poses. First, as the authority
the canon of Scripture, the doc-
the genuineness of what we re-
ow that Scripture *comes from*
we of this age receive it *upon*
through tradition both *the Bible*
is divinely inspired." (p. 42.)

"The sacred volume itself, as well as *the doctrine of its inspira-
tion*, comes to us by traditional conveyance." (pp. 44, 5.) "We
receive the New Testament in its existing shape on tradition."
(p. 341.) "We consider the inspired canon was cut short in
the apostles whose works are contained in the New Testament,
and that their successors had no gift of expounding the law of
Christ such as they had, *because* the same ages so accounted it."
(p. 371.) Secondly, for the interpretation of Scripture. "The
need of tradition arises only from *the obscurity* of Scripture, and
is terminated with the interpretation of it." (p. 384.) "Scrip-
ture does not interpret itself, or answer objections to misinterpre-
tations. We must betake ourselves to the early church, and see
how they understood it." "Scripture was never intended to
teach doctrine to the many." "I would not deny as an abstract
proposition that a Christian may gain the whole truth from the
Scripture, but would maintain that the chances are *very seriously*
against a given individual. I would not deny, but rather
maintain, that a religious, wise and intellectually gifted man will
succeed: but who answers to this description but *the collective*
church?" (pp. 189-90.) "These two [i. e. the Bible and Catho-
lic Tradition] together make up a joint rule, [i. e. of faith];
Scripture is interpreted by Tradition, Tradition verified by Scrip-
ture." (p. 327.) Acute men among them [i. e. Protestants] see
that the very elementary notion which they have adopted of the
Bible without note or comment being *the sole authoritative judge*
in controversies of faith, is a *self-destructive principle*." (p. 35.)
Scripture is "*but* the document of appeal, and catholic tradition
the *authoritative teacher* of Christians. (p. 343.) And "*the catho-
lic doctrines* of the Trinity, Incarnation and others similar to
these, are the true interpretations of the *notions* contained in
Scripture of those doctrines respectively." (p. 153.) "They [i.
e. popular Protestants] must either give up their maxim about
the Bible, and the Bible only, or they must give up the Nicene
formulary. *The Bible does not carry with it its own interpretation.*
When pressed to say why they maintain fundamentals of faith,
they will have no good reason to give, supposing they do not re-

ceive the creed also as a FIRST PRINCIPLE. Why, it is asked them, should those who equally with themselves believe in the Bible be denied the name of Christians, because they do not happen to discern the doctrine of the Trinity therein? If they answer that Scripture itself singles out certain doctrines as necessary to salvation, and that the Trinity is one of them, this indeed, is *most true*, but *avails not* to persons committed to so untrue a theory.

It is urged against them, that, though the texts referred to *may imply the catholic doctrine, yet they need not*; that they ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY ONE OUT OF SEVERAL THEORIES; or at any rate that other persons think so; that these others have as much right to their opinion as the party called orthodox to theirs; that human interpreters have no warrant to force upon them one view in particular; that private judgment must be left unmolested; that man must not close what God has left open; that Unitarians (as they are called) believe in a Trinity, only not in the catholic sense of it; and that, where men are willing to take and profess what is written, it is not for us to be "wise above what is written," especially when by such a course we break the bonds of peace and charity. THIS REASONING, GRANTING THE FIRST STEP, IS RESISTLESS." (p. 292, 3.) That is, the Bible is altogether of ambiguous meaning; it may or may not mean to speak "the catholic doctrine," it is "consistent with any one out of several theories," or at any rate there are people who think so, and therefore it is unjust to say that the Socinians are not orthodox, unless we have an interpretation of it to tell us what it means, which we can look upon as equally "a first principle," that is an infallible or divine informant; which "first principle" is "the creed," a phrase used by Mr. Newman to signify, *according to convenience*, either the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed, or those in Irenæus, Tertullian, &c., as if they were all identical. Mr. Newman is not aware, I suppose, that the Apostles' Creed has been misinterpreted as much as Scripture by the Socinians, and therefore that, by his own showing, his Socinian "resistless reasoning" is as applicable against himself, when he condemns the Socinians, as against his "popular Protestants."

It is considered also to be *important*, and in fact *relatively necessary* for making known to us religious truths not in Scripture; for it is "partly the interpretation, partly *the supplement of Scripture*." (p. 298.) In p. 335, we have a specimen of these supplementary truths. "It is *only* by tradition that we have any safe and clear rule for changing the weekly feast from the seventh to the first day;"—so that it is a necessary part of the divine rule of *practice*. "Again, our divines, such as Bramhall, Ball, Pearson, and Patrick, believe that the blessed Mary was

'ever virgin,' as the church has called her; but tradition was [certainly] their *only* informant on the subject."

Such is the doctrine of Mr. Newman with respect to Scripture and Patristical Tradition, a doctrine precisely identical with that of the Romanists, as we shall presently prove. Indeed, Mr. Newman appears, with one exception, to allow as much. For after explaining the Romish doctrine of "tradition," he says, "As a beautiful theory, it must, as a whole, ever remain. I do not, indeed, deny that to a certain point it is tenable: but this is a very different thing from admitting that it is so as regards those very tenets for which the Romanists would adduce it. They have to show, not only that there was such a traditionary system, and that it has lasted to this day, but that their peculiarities are part of it." (pp. 41, 42.) "We agree with the Romanist in appealing to antiquity as our great teacher, but deny that his doctrines are to be found in antiquity. So far then is clear; we do not deny *the force of tradition in the abstract*; we do not deny the soundness of the argument from antiquity; but we challenge the Romanist to prove the matter of fact. We deny that *his* doctrines are in antiquity," &c. (pp. 47, 48.) "Our controversy with Romanists turns more upon *facts* than upon *first principles*." (pp. 50, 51.)

The *doctrine* maintained, therefore, on the subject of "tradition" by Mr. Newman and the Romanists is the same. And the only difference on this subject supposed by Mr. Newman himself to exist between his doctrine and that of the Romanists, is thus stated by him:—"We differ from the Romanist in this, not in denying that tradition is valuable, but in maintaining that by itself and without Scripture warrant, it does not convey to us any article *necessary to salvation*." (p. 370.) This observation however is, as I shall show presently, founded on a mistake, for the Romanists maintain this as much as Mr. Newman. They hold that Scripture contains all points necessary to salvation; and when they speak of the necessity of believing things not there declared, but delivered by "tradition," it is not because such things are in themselves necessary to salvation, but because "tradition" being a divine informant, a rejection of them is a direct act of disobedience to God.

In all respects, therefore, the *doctrine* of Mr. Newman and the Romanists on this subject is the same, the only difference being as to whether some particular articles can be proved by "tradition."

With this system of Mr. Newman agrees perfectly that of Mr. Keble, as I shall now proceed to show.

First, with respect to the Holy Scriptures, Mr. Keble grants, in theory, that "every fundamental point of doctrine is contained

in the unquestioned books of that canon [i. e. the New Testament] taken along with the Hebrew Scriptures," and hence "that nothing is to be insisted on as a point of faith necessary to salvation, but what is contained in or may be proved by canonical Scripture." (pp. 30, 31.) But Scripture is not our sole rule of faith, for they are in error who "reject the notion of a rule of faith made up of Scripture and tradition together." (p. 82.) Nor does it contain the *whole* "orthodox faith,"—for, the *whole* "orthodox faith," though it is held to "include the written word," is not included in that word, but is "the whole creed of the apostolical church as guaranteed to us by Holy Scripture, and by consent of pure antiquity." (pp. 80, 81.)

With respect to "tradition," it is held that consentient patristical tradition is the record of that "oral teaching" of the apostles which the "Holy Spirit inspired," (p. 24.) Such traditions are "*unquestionable* relics of the apostles," (p. 41.) "*precious apostolical relics*," (p. 42.) which men "might and *ought* to have *religiously* depended upon." (p. 45.) "Not a few fragments yet remain, very precious and sacred fragments, of the unwritten teaching of the first age of the church," (meaning *of the apostles*.) (p. 32.) Church tradition is "*practically infallible*," (p. 142.) "*infallible*," (p. 146.) and "if we will be impartial, we cannot hide it from ourselves, that God's unwritten word, if it can be any how authenticated, [and the position contended for is, that it can be authenticated, and is in the writings of the Fathers,] must necessarily demand *the same reverence* from us [as his written word,] and for exactly the same reason, because it is his word." (p. 26.) Consentient patristical tradition, therefore, is "*God's unwritten word*," "*demanding the same reverence* from us" as his written word, i. e. in the language of the Council of Trent, is to be received "*pari pietatis affectu*." Nay, "*as long as the canon of the New Testament was incomplete, the unwritten system served as a test even for the apostles' own writings*." "*Apostolical tradition was divinely appointed in the church as the touchstone of canonical Scripture itself*." (pp. 26, 27.) "*The very writings of the apostles were to be first tried by it before they could be incorporated into the canon*." (p. 28.) "Between the traditional and written relics of the apostles" there is this difference, "that in the former the *things* only—in the latter the very words also—are *holy*." (p. 107.)

With respect to the nature of this "unwritten word," and the way in which it is ascertained, Mr. Keble summarily describes it by the term, the "consent of pure antiquity," (pp. 44 and 81;) "the catholic consent," (p. 80.) "Those *rules* in which all primitive councils are uniform, those *rites and formularies* which are found in all primitive liturgies, and those *interpretations* and

{ principles of interpretation in which all orthodox Fathers agree," he considers to form an indubitable part of "*the system of the apostles*," entitled to equal reverence with their acknowledged writings. (p. 40.) "If any one ask how we ascertain them, we answer, By application of the well-known rule *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* ; antiquity, universality, catholicity." (pp. 32, 33.)

Among the points which rest on the authority of "tradition," he reckons the canon of Scripture ; "The points of catholic consent known by tradition constitute the knots and ties of the whole system ; being such as these, *the canon of Scripture*," &c. (p. 41.) "Among the traditionary truths is *the canon of Scripture itself*;" (p. 45) : as well as its inspiration, for it is by tradition that "*the validity*" of Scripture is "ascertained." (p. 74.) Also the *interpretation* of Scripture, and the full development of its doctrines. The "interpretation of Scripture" is one of "three distinct fields of Christian knowledge" which he points out, "in neither of which can we advance satisfactorily or *safely* without *constant appeal to tradition* such as has been described." (p. 34.) "Catholic tradition bears upon Scripture interpretation not only indirectly by supplying, as just now stated, certain great landmarks of apostolical doctrine CONFORMABLY TO WHICH THE WRITTEN STATEMENTS ARE ALL TO BE INTERPRETED ; but also in numerous cases directly." (pp. 35, 36.) "Whether we look to *discipline*, to *interpretation* or to *doctrine*, every way we see reason to be thankful for many *fragments of apostolical practice and teaching* MOST NEEDFUL to guide us in the right use of Holy Scripture." (p. 39.) The English church, "acknowledging Scripture as her written charter, and *tradition as the common law whereby both the validity and practical meaning of that charter is ascertained*, venerates both as INSEPARABLE members of one great providential system." (p. 74.) This necessity of tradition for the interpretation of Scripture is of course supposed to arise from the *obscurity* of Scripture. "If so it had pleased Almighty God," says Mr. Keble, "the Scriptures might have been all *clear* of themselves. . . . Men may go on imagining the advantages of such a dispensation, until they have persuaded themselves that things are really so ordered." (p. 149.) So that even in the fundamental points of faith the Scriptures are not "*clear*." Notwithstanding all the explanations given by the apostles on those points in their writings, they have not at last made them clear ; they have not written so as to be understood ; the cogent proof of this being, that in all ages some have interpreted their writings contrary to the orthodox faith, so that the perverse misinterpretation of the natural mind is to be taken as

evidence that the Scriptures are not clear. Hence the observation that the Bible is "a volume which *may* be understood without traditional aid," is made by Mr. Keble the subject of particular remark as *an objectionable statement*. (p. 88.) "Tradition," he says, "helps to explain the Scriptures somewhat in the same way, and with the same kind of evidence, as the grammar of a language, once rightly taught, explains the sentences of that language." (pp. 141, 2.) Hence he holds the "*rule of faith*" to be "*made up of Scripture and tradition together.*" (p. 82.)

The two other "fields of Christian knowledge, in neither of which we can advance satisfactorily or safely without constant appeal to tradition," are "the system and arrangement of fundamental articles," and "*the discipline, formularies, and rites of the Church of Christ.*" (pp. 34, 37.)

Further; "tradition" reveals to us truths "*not contained in Scripture.*" For Mr. Keble says, "As long as it is only doubtful whether any statement or precept is part of the apostolic system or no, so long a mind imbued with true devotion will treat that statement or precept with reverence. . . . so long the mere fact of its **NOT BEING CONTAINED IN SCRIPTURE** cannot be felt as a justification for casting it aside. . . . But, in truth, it may be *proved to the satisfaction of any reasonable mind, that not a few fragments yet remain*, very precious and sacred fragments, of the unwritten teaching of the first age of the church. The paramount authority, for example, of the successors of the apostles in church government; the threefold order established from the beginning; the virtue of the blessed Eucharist as a commemorative sacrifice; infant baptism; and above all, *the Catholic doctrine of the most holy Trinity as contained in the Nicene Creed*. All these, however surely *confirmed* from Scripture, are yet ascertainable parts of the primitive unwritten system of which we yet enjoy the benefit." (pp. 31, 32.) Such are some of the points *not contained in Scripture*, which are revealed to us by tradition. This is not the place to notice them more particularly; but it is impossible not to direct the reader's attention to the statement, that the "Catholic doctrine of the most holy Trinity, as contained in the Nicene Creed," is "not contained in Scripture," though it may be "confirmed from Scripture," directly contrary to the statement of our first Homily, to mention no other authority.

Of the importance attached by Mr. Keble to the traditionary doctrinal matter not contained in Scripture, we may judge from the following passages:—"The sacred building is so divinely, though invisibly, cemented, that for aught we know, it is impossible to remove any portion, either of scriptural or traditionary

truth, without weakening the whole arch. Let us, above all things, beware of the presumption of selecting for ourselves, among the truths and laws of the Most High, which we will retain, and which we may venture to dispense with." (p. 46.) "Confining our view to that which *touches the foundation*, we shall find that the matters are *neither few nor unimportant*, which are settled by traditionary evidence." "The points of catholic consent *known by tradition*, constitute the *knots and ties of the whole system*, being such as these,—the canon of Scripture, the *full doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation*, the oblation and consecration of the Eucharist, the apostolical succession; truths and orders soon enumerated, but such as to extend in *vital efficacy* through every part of the great scheme of the church." (pp. 41, 42.)

When, therefore, Mr. Keble says that Scripture *contains* all the fundamental points of faith, we must either suppose that he thinks the supplementary part of the doctrine of the Trinity learnt from tradition not to be fundamental, or (which rather appears to be his view and that of Mr. Newman) that Scripture *so* contains these truths that we need tradition to assure us of the fact, and that, then, after having learnt the truth from tradition, we may find in Scripture passages which will "*confirm*" it, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, "hints" and "notices" of the orthodox faith.

Such is the doctrine of Mr. Keble on this subject, being, as must be evident to the reader, precisely the same as that of Mr. Newman, the divine origin and necessity of "tradition" being indeed rather more than less strongly enforced, and therefore, like Mr. Newman's, identical with that of the Romanists. It is rather remarkable also that he has made the same mistake as Mr. Newman with respect to the nature of the Romish doctrine on this subject, accusing the Romanists of avouching "*tradition of the substance of doctrine independent of Scripture, and purporting to be of things necessary to salvation.*" (p. 71.) But this, as I shall prove presently, they do not do.

The doctrine of Mr. Keble and Mr. Newman, then, on this subject, is in few words this,—That the revelation made to the world by our Lord and his apostles comes down to us in two different channels, one of which is the written word, the other the successional delivery by the Fathers of that which the apostles delivered *orally* to the church. And as the apostles entered into fuller explanations of the doctrines of the faith in their oral statements than they have in their writings, and gave some information and directions to the church on matters both of doctrine and practice not contained in those writings, the record of their inspired testimony which we have in the writings of anti-

quity, is more full and clear than that which we have in the Scriptures. And as is in all the fundamental doctrines of the faith and some others of less moment, as well as in various points of practice, this traditional record of what the apostles delivered orally can be so verified as to be a "*practically infallible*" witness of what they did so deliver, in all these cases the brief and obscure "hints" and "notices" of Scripture are to be interpreted by the more full and clear *record of revelation* we have in "catholic tradition," and the deficiencies of Scripture made up by the "supplemental" records of "catholic tradition."

And as to the degree of plainness with which the faith is delivered in Scripture, the author of Tract 85 tells us that "the gospel doctrine or message" "is but *indirectly* and *overtly* recorded in Scripture under the surface." (p. 27.) "Scripture is not one book—it is as if you were to seize the papers or correspondence of leading men in any school of philosophy or science, which were *never designed for publication*, and bring them out in one volume. You would find probably in the collection so resulting many papers begun and not finished, some parts systematic and didactic, but the greater part made up of *hints or of notices* which assumed first principles instead of asserting them, or of discussions upon particular points which happened to require their attention. I say the doctrines, the first principles, the rules, the objects of the school would be taken for granted, alluded to, implied not stated. You would have some trouble to get at them; you would have many repetitions, many hiatuses, many things which looked like contradictions; *you would have to work your way through heterogeneous materials, and after your best efforts there would be much hopelessly obscure*; or, on the other hand, you might look in vain in such a casual collection for some particular opinions which the writers were known nevertheless to have held, nay to have insisted on. *Such* I conceive, with limitations presently to be noticed, is *the structure of the Bible*." [The limitations shall be given after the next passage.] "Try to make out the history of Rome from the extant letters of some of its great politicians, and from the fragments of ancient annals, histories, laws, inscriptions, and medals, and you will have something like the matter of fact viewed antecedently as regards the structure of the Bible, and the task of deducing the true system of religion from it." (pp. 30, 31.) On all this I offer no comment, but commend it to the serious attention of the reader.

Now for the "limitations." Unfortunately for our opponents, there is an Article of our church upon this subject, (Art. vi.) and therefore somehow or other the *language* of that Article must be retained. We are therefore told that "at least as regards mat-

ters of faith Scripture does *contain* all that is necessary for salvation; it has been overruled to do so by Him who inspired it." (p. 32.) But determined that those words shall mean nothing and be no obstacle in his way, the writer immediately proceeds to the task of explaining them away, and shows us, in the following words, the object and value of his preceding remarks. "This antecedent improbability [*i. e.* of Scripture containing the faith] tells even in the case of the doctrines of faith as far as this, that it reconciles us to the necessity of gaining them *indirectly* from Scripture, for it is a *near thing* (if I may so speak) *that they are in Scripture at all; the wonder is that they are all there; humanly judging, they would not be there but for God's interposition; and therefore since they are there by a sort of accident, it is not strange they shall be BUT LATENT there, and only indirectly producible thence.*" (pp. 32—4.)

And on this subject he thus contradicts himself within the compass of a few pages. Having stated in p. 25, as the doctrine of the English church, that as to the whole system of religion revealed in the Gospel, "though it is in tradition, yet it can also be gathered from the communications of Scripture," he tells us in p. 48, that "though Scripture be considered to be *altogether silent* as to the intermediate state . . . *there is nothing in this circumstance to disprove THE CHURCH'S DOCTRINE, (if there be other grounds for it) that there is an intermediate state, and that it is important.*"

Nay, still more, to prepare us for the reception of matters delivered by "tradition" which may seem even *at variance* with Scripture, he collects together (pp. 36—48) a number of instances of what he holds to be *seeming contradictions in Scripture itself*, in order to draw from them the conclusion, that in the same way things delivered by "tradition" may not be really at variance with Scripture, though they may appear to be so. And that the reader may know that I am not exaggerating when I state this, I will give his conclusion in his own words. "*The argument,*" he says, "*stated in a few words stands thus;—as distinct portions of Scripture itself are apparently inconsistent with one another, yet are not really so; therefore it does not follow that Scripture and catholic doctrine are at variance with each other, even if they seem to be.*" (p. 49.) How this may strike the reader I know not, but to me it appears to outdo Rome itself, and leave Bellarmine to go to school.

The doctrine on this subject, then, advocated by Mr. Newman and Mr. Keble, may be summed up in the five following points.

1. That consentient patristical tradition, or "catholic consent," is an unwritten word of God, a divine informant in religion, and consequently entitled, as to its *substance*, to equal respect with the Holy Scriptures.

2. That such tradition is consequently a part of the divinely-revealed rule of faith and practice.

3. That it is a necessary part of the divine rule of faith and practice, on account of the defectiveness of Scripture, for that,—

(1) Though it does not reveal to us any fundamental articles of faith or practice not *noticed* in Scripture, Holy Scripture containing, that is, *giving hints or notices of* all the fundamental articles of faith and practice, it is yet a necessary part of the divine rule of faith and practice as the interpreter of Scripture, and as giving the full development of many points, some of which are fundamental, which are but imperfectly developed in Scripture; and

(2) It is an important part of the rule, as conveying to us various important doctrines and rules not contained in Scripture.

4. That it is a necessary part of the divine rule of faith and practice, because of the obscurity of Scripture even in some of the fundamental articles, which makes Scripture insufficient to *teach* us even the fundamentals of faith and practice.

5. That it is only by the testimony of patristical tradition that we are assured of the *inspiration* of Scripture, what books are *canonical*, and the *genuineness* of what we receive as such.

The doctrine held by Dr. Pusey on this subject is so very pithily expressed in a sentence occurring in his "Earnest Remonstrance," that it is hardly necessary to search any further.

"Our controversy with Rome," he says, "is not an *a priori* question on the value of tradition in itself, or at an earlier period of the church, or of such traditions as, though not contained in Scripture, are primitive, universal, and apostolical, but it is one PURELY HISTORICAL, that the Romanist traditions not being such, but on the contrary repugnant to Scripture, are not to be received." (p. 18.)

This at least is plain speaking for a divine of the Church of England.

Let it, therefore, be distinctly understood that when the authors of these works complain of being misrepresented when said to favour Romanism in their views of patristical tradition, they do so only because they think that the Romish *doctrine* on the subject is the catholic doctrine, though some of the traditions the Romanists admit are unauthorized, and therefore that they ought not to be thus stigmatized, because, though holding the Romish *doctrine* on the subject, they do not hold all the traditions peculiar to Rome.

It is quite true, indeed, (nor do I wish to conceal the fact,) that there are divers nice distinctions drawn by these writers in other parts of their works, by which, for very obvious reasons, they endeavour to rescue their doctrine from the charge of being

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identical with that of the Romanists. Dr. Pusey himself, though in the above sentence he clearly admits the identity of the two, endeavours, in his *apologetical* "Letter to the Bishop of Oxford," to draw a distinction between them *in words*, by telling us that "Rome differs from us as to the authority which she ascribes to tradition; she regards it as *co-ordinate*, our divines as *sub-ordinate*; as to the way in which it is to be employed; she as independent of Holy Scripture, ours as subservient to and blended with it," &c.; and after adding some other supposed marks of distinction, in which the distinct questions of "tradition" and church authority are strangely confused, concludes, "So then beyond the name of tradition the church of Rome and ~~our~~ ^{our} divines differ in every thing besides." (pp. 41, 42.) Now all this is, beyond question, uttered in the most perfect good faith, but it will be found practically to be nothing more or less than a complete juggle of words. For what, I would ask, can be the use or propriety of drawing distinctions by the application of the words *co-ordinate* and *subordinate*, between two informants *equally* divine, which we are told that Scripture and tradition are? The sole question with which we are concerned is, whether patristical tradition is a divine informant, and therefore binds the conscience to the reception of what it delivers. He who holds that it is, is bound to receive it as the Romanists do, *pari pietatis affectu* with the written word. And such, beyond contradiction, is the doctrine upheld in the works from which we have quoted above, as well as in other publications attributed to the same authors, as, for instance, the British Critic, where "antiquity" is expressly spoken of as "*revelation*" equally with Scripture.¹ Dr. Pusey himself tells us, a few pages after, that "*we owe . . . to the decisions of the church universal, Faith.*" (p. 53.) Now taking this sentence in its least obnoxious signification, as referring to the decisions of the church universal, not as *self-authoritative*, but as the infallible witness of apostolical tradition, (which is, I suppose, its intended meaning,) I would ask whether church-tradition is not placed here upon precisely the same footing with Scripture, and whether the distinction between the two alluded to above is not a mere verbal and not a real distinction? Indeed, it is obvious that to maintain that Scripture contains only an imperfect delineation, hints and notices, of the most important doctrines, and that the full revelation of them is only to be found in "tradition," and yet aver that we make tradition only *subordinate* to Scripture, is an inconsistency and (I must be pardoned for adding, an) absurdity of no ordinary kind.

Mr. Newman has also offered some remarks of a similar na-

¹ See Brit. Crit., for. Jan., 1838, Article on Froude's Remains, and elsewhere.

ture. But we shall notice them more particularly in another place.

Such, then, is the doctrine on patristical tradition propounded in these works as the doctrine of the English church.

The reader should also understand that this doctrine forms part of a *system* laid down (though perhaps with some variations and inconsistencies) in the Tracts and works to which we have referred, to which is very confidently ascribed (I leave the reader to determine how justly) the name of Catholicism and Anglicanism, as opposed to Romanism on one side and Protestantism on the other; and as the subjects of church authority and the right of private judgment are intimately connected with that we are now considering, I will add here some extracts from Mr. Newman's Lectures sufficient to put the reader in possession of his doctrine (which, from their union in the publication of the Tracts, we must of course conclude to be that of Dr. Pusey and Mr. Keble also) on those subjects, that he may see more clearly the nature of the system.

First, as to the authority of the church.

"The church," says Mr. Newman, "enforces, on her own responsibility, what is *an historical fact, and ascertainable as other facts, and obvious to the intelligence of inquirers as other facts*; viz., the doctrine of the apostles; and *private judgment has as little exercise here as in any matters of sense or experience.*" "The church enforces^a a fact—apostolical tradition—as the doctrinal key to Scripture, and private judgment *expatiates beyond the limits of that tradition.*" (pp. 224, 5.) How Mr. Newman can reconcile the statement that "the doctrine of the apostles" is a "*historical fact ascertainable as other facts, and obvious to the intelligence of inquirers as other facts,*" with the fact that the nominal church has always been more or less divided in opinion respecting it, I must leave to him to explain. It must be confessed, however, that if it were not supposed to be so obvious a historical fact, Mr. Newman takes good care to give the church sufficient power to enforce it. For he says,—"*Not only is the church catholic bound to teach the truth, but she is ever divinely guided to teach it; her witness of the christian faith is a matter of promise as well as of duty; her discernment of it is secured by a heavenly as well as a human rule. She is indefectible in it, and therefore not only has authority to enforce, but is of authority in declaring it that doctrine, which is true, considered as an historical fact, is true also because she teaches it.*" (pp. 225, 6.)

Here, as is clear, the doctrine that the church is an infallible guide in matters of faith, is very distinctly laid down, and Mr. Newman, commenting upon 1 Tim. iii. 15; Eph. iv. 11—14; Isa.

lix. 21; and observing that these texts "are considered by the Romanist to prove the infallibility of the church in all matters of faith and general morals," adds,—“They certainly will bear so to be interpreted, it cannot be denied : and if this be so, why, it may be asked, do we not interpret them as the Romanists do?” (pp. 231, 2;) to which, he replies, that the church, from her “misconduct,” “may have forfeited *in a measure* her original privileges.” (p. 235.) “We shall find, I think, in the New Testament, that the promise to her was suspended, more or less, upon a condition which for many centuries she has actually broken. This condition is unity.” (p. 236.) Accordingly he limits her infallibility to *the fundamental points of faith*, holding that “the antient church will be our model in *all matters of doctrine*, till it broke up into portions, and for catholic agreement substituted peculiar and local opinions; but that, since that time, the church has possessed no fuller measure of the truth than we see it has at this day; viz. merely the fundamental faith;” (p. 241;) and *to that extent* he ascribes to her *permanent infallibility*. “Both we and Romanists,” he says, “hold that the church catholic is unerring in its *declarations* of faith or saving doctrine.” (p. 252. See also p. 232.)

Strange to say, he proceeds to point out two passages in our received formularies as bearing out this doctrine. “First, in the 20th Article we are told that the church has ‘authority in controversies of faith.’ Now these words certainly do not merely mean that she has authority to enforce such doctrines as can *historically be proved to be apostolical*. They do not speak of her power of enforcing truth, or of her power of enforcing at all, but say that she has ‘authority in controversies;’ whereas, if this authority depended on the mere knowledge of an historical fact, and much more if only on her persuasion in a matter of opinion, any individual of competent information has the same in his place and degree. The church, then, according to this Article, has a power which individuals have not; a power, *not merely as the ruling principle of a society, to admit and reject members*, not simply a power of imposing tests, but *simply ‘authority in controversies of faith.’* But how can she have *this authority* unless she be *certainly true in her declarations*? She can have no authority in declaring a lie.” (pp. 226, 7.) The sum total of which reasoning—if reasoning it can be called—amounts to this, that there can be no authority where there is a liability to error, a doctrine which needs no further refutation than a clear statement of it. “Our reception of the Athanasian Creed,” it is added, “is another proof of our holding *the infallibility of the church*, as some of our divines express it, in matters of saving faith. In that creed it is unhesitatingly said, that certain doc-

trines are necessary to be believed in order to salvation; they are minutely and precisely described; no room is left for private judgment; *none for any examination into Scripture, with the view of discovering them.*" (p. 227.) Now does Mr. Newman really see no difference between the church *as represented by a body of her pastors* bearing her testimony to what she believes to be the truth, and to her belief in the fatal nature of certain errors; and moreover using her authority as it respects terms of communion in support of the plain truths of Scripture; and her claiming to be an infallible guide? Strange indeed is it, if he does not; though, certainly, when coupled with another of his remarks, one may cease to feel surprised at it. "They [i. e. the multitude of Protestants," he says,] consider every man his own judge; they hold that every man may and must read Scripture for himself, and judge about its meaning, and make up his mind for himself; nay is, as regards himself, and practically, an *infallible judge of its meaning*;—*infallible, certainly*, for were the whole new creation against him . . . yet according to the popular doctrine, though he was aware of this, he ought ultimately to rest in his own interpretations of Scripture, and to follow his private judgment." (pp. 319, 20.) So that forsooth, when a man claims to decide for himself what is the meaning of God's message to him, he is said to claim infallibility.

It must be observed, however, in order to obtain a clear view of Mr. Newman's doctrine on this subject, that he considers the church herself to be not a judge but a witness of the sense of Scripture; he does not consider the church herself to have authority to judge of the sense of Scripture, but only to be a witness of what catholic tradition delivers as the sense of Scripture. Catholic tradition is to the church herself the authoritative interpreter of Scripture. "The church is not a *judge* of the sense of Scripture in the common sense of the word, but a *witness*. If, indeed, the word judge be taken to mean what it means in the courts of law, one vested with *authority to declare* the received appointments and usages of the realm, and with power to enforce them, then the church is a judge—but not of Scripture, but of Tradition. . . . We consider the church as a witness, a keeper and witness of Catholic tradition, and in this sense invested with authority, just as in political matters an ambassador possessed of instructions from his *Government* would speak with authority. [Catholic tradition, therefore, bears to the church the same relation as a *Government* to its *ambassador*]. . . . She bears witness to a fact, that such and such a doctrine, or such a sense of Scripture, has ever been received and came from the apostles; *the proof of this lies first in her own unanimity throughout her various branches, next in the writings of the antient*

Fathers : and she acts upon this her witness as the Executive does in civil matters, and is responsible for it ; but she does not undertake of herself to determine the sense of Scripture, she has no immediate power over it, she but alleges and submits to what is antient and catholic. . . . We consider antiquity and catholicity to be the real guides, and the church their organ." (pp. 320—322.) So that, in fact, the office of the church is authoritatively to promulge the interpretation of Scripture given by catholic tradition, and she is divinely guided to tell us truly and infallibly in the fundamentals of faith, what that interpretation is. The Bible, therefore, is to the church herself a very secondary book, for she can receive its truths only as they are doled out to her by the tradition of preceding ages. "Catholic tradition" being the unwritten word of God, and therefore entitled to equal respect with the Scriptures, and moreover the *authoritative* interpreter of the meaning of the Scriptures, and containing a full revelation of the doctrines of the faith, which in Scriptures are only indirectly and obscurely noticed, it is of course much more valuable than the Scriptures. And the first "proof" that the testimony of "the church" as to the witness of apostolical tradition is correct is, "her own unanimity throughout her various branches." "Now "the church" is made up of these branches, and cannot speak at all but through their unanimity, and therefore this amounts to saying that the first "proof" that her testimony is correct is that she bears that testimony. And, in fact, though "tradition" should fail her, she would be "*almost* infallible," Mr. Newman thinks, for he says,— "the church truly may be said *almost infallibly* to interpret Scripture, though, from the possession of past tradition, and amid the divisions of the time present, perhaps at no period in the course of the dispensation has she had the need and the opportunity of interpreting it for herself." . . . Such interpretations "the church has never attempted." (p. 190.) It is some comfort, however, for her to know, that if any thing should oblige her to attempt it, she will be "*almost* infallible."

The church, therefore, being thus vested with authority to declare and enforce that catholic tradition which is the authoritative interpreter of Scripture, is to be viewed herself as, with respect to us, the authoritative interpreter of Scripture. "We do not," says Mr. Newman, "set up the church against Scripture,—but we make her the keeper and *interpreter* of Scripture." (p. 228.) And "if we inquire the *ground* of this authority in the church," it is "that she speaks merely as *the organ of the catholic voice*," the organ of catholic tradition ; (p. 227 :) and in fundamentals is to be viewed, as we have seen, as infallible in her decrees.

After these statements, the reader will of course not be surprised at finding that the Protestant doctrine of the right of private judgment is absolutely offensive to him. In immaterial points, indeed, he would allow the right, provided that it was *silently* exercised; but that it should be exercised upon points upon which *our salvation depends*, that is quite out of the question.

"By the right of private judgement," he says, "in matters of religious belief and practice, is meant the prerogative, considered to belong to each individual Christian, of ascertaining and deciding for himself from Scripture what is gospel truth, and what is not." (p. 152.)

This principle is, in Mr. Newman's view, most pernicious. He calls it "that mischievous, but very popular principle among us, that in *serious* matters we may interpret Scripture by private judgment." (p. 218.) "If the church," he says, "does not claim any gift of interpretation for herself in the high points in question, [i. e. the fundamentals of the faith,] much less does she allow individuals to pretend to it. Explicit as our articles are in asserting that the doctrines of faith are contained and must be pointed out in Scripture, yet they give no hint that private persons may presume to search Scripture independently of external help, and to determine for themselves what is saving, [in other words, presume to obey the direct injunctions of the first Homily.] The church has a prior claim to do so, but even the church asserts it not, but hands over the office to catholic antiquity. *In what our Articles say of Holy Scripture as the document of proof, exclusive reference is had to TEACHING.* It is not said that individuals are to infer the faith, but that the church is to prove it from Scripture; not that individuals are to learn it, but are to be taught it." (pp. 323, 4.) So that individuals are not even to make Scripture the document of proof; it is not for them even to test what "tradition," or "the church," may say, by Scripture: no, "let this maxim," it is said, "be laid down concerning all that the church catholic holds, to the full extent of her *prophetical tradition*, that her members must either believe or silently acquiesce in the *whole* of it." (p. 303); aye, so much so, that "*when the sense of Scripture, as interpreted by reason, is contrary to the sense given to it by catholic antiquity, we ought to side with the latter.*" (p. 160.)

Now, I must say, that it appears to me a very wise precaution on the part of the Romanists, holding similar views to these, to interdict the general use of the Scriptures, and only to give permission to a few whom they can trust to read them; for if our faith is thus to be grounded on the authority of the church, and not upon what appears to us to be the meaning of the Holy

Scriptures, it is a pity to give men generally an opportunity of consulting them, lest they should happen to think, as some assuredly will think, that their meaning, even in some important points, is not precisely what their church tells them that it is; especially if they are so "obscure," and contain only "hints" and "notices" of even the fundamental points of the faith. And how *near* Mr. Newman has got to this view of the matter may be judged from the following sentence:—"By the right of private judgment is meant, not that all *must*, but that all *may* search Scripture, and determine or prove their creed from it: THAT IS, PROVIDED THEY ARE DULY QUALIFIED, for I suppose this is always implied, though persons may differ what the *qualifications* are." (p. 174.)

In "serious matters," then, the right of private judgment is altogether denied, and our faith is to rest not upon Scripture, (except as far as we may *happen* to think that what the church delivers as catholic tradition gives the true meaning of Scripture,) but upon that which the church delivers to us as catholic tradition, or rather upon the church, as one infallibly guided to direct us aright in fundamentals.

The right of private judgment is confined to "matters of inferior moment." "In matters of inferior moment," says Mr. Newman, "both the church and the individual have room to exercise their own powers; the individual to judge for himself, and the church to give her judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful; and that for this simple reason, either that Scripture or tradition is obscure, indeterminate, or silent." (p. 325.) "The church enforces a fact—an apostolical tradition—as the doctrinal key to Scripture, and private judgment *expatiates beyond the limits of that tradition.*" (p. 225.) We hold "that the church has authority, and that individuals may judge for themselves *outside the range of that authority.*" (p. 320.) But in such matters (and so far I quite agree with him) "it is pious to sacrifice our own opinion to that of the church," and "we must avoid causing any disturbance." (p. 161.)

Catholic tradition, however, being considered a divine informant, this right of private judgment cannot of course be considered to extend to those matters even of inferior moment to which that tradition is supposed to bear witness.

Now, after attributing so much to the authority of "the catholic church," making her infallible in all fundamental points of faith, and requiring absolute submission to her *authority* in such points, and the suspension of all private judgment upon them, it might reasonably be expected that Mr. Newman should tell us how we may learn what this church says. He allows this, and remarks, "You speak, it may be urged against me, of the church

catholic, of the church's teaching, and of obedience to the church. What is meant by the church catholic at this day? Where is she? What are her local instruments and organs? How does she speak? When and where does she teach, forbid, command, censure? How can she be said to utter one and the same doctrine every where, when we are at war with all the rest of Christendom, and not at peace at home?" (p. 310.) What then is his reply? It is as follows:—"Whatever truth there is in these remarks, still I CANNOT ALLOW that what I have been above drawing out is therefore a mere tale of other times, when addressed to those who are really bent on serving God as well as they can, and who consult what is most likely to please him. The very difficulty of applying it will be a test, whether we earnestly desire to do his will or not." (p. 311.)

In other words, he candidly confesses that after all he cannot tell who constitute "the catholic church." Having led us into the wood with a promise that we should there find an infallible guide in all fundamental points, he fairly confesses that he knows not where or what he is, intimating withal, as we shall see presently, what is a tolerably clear proof that to mortal eyes he may be indiscernible. Can he be surprised that the reply of many is, We have got an infallible guide already, given us by God himself, and with that we are contented until you can distinctly point out to us another of whom you can produce equal evidence that he comes from God.

The church indeed, as consisting of "the blessed company of all faithful people," must no doubt be always orthodox in the fundamentals of the faith. But how is the voice of that church to be heard? Where are its declarations and decrees to be found? And Mr. Newman admits that "the promise that the word of truth should not depart out of the mouth of the church . . . might be satisfied . . . though this were all, which many think to be its highest meaning, that there should always be *in the church some true believers*" (p. 234); i. e. he admits that the true church may consist of a select body of believers scattered throughout the nominal church, so that the voice of the legislative part of the church may be any thing but the voice of the true church, i. e. the sound part of the professing church. For instance, the voice of the Romish church on the doctrine of justification, as heard at Trent, may be any thing but the voice of that portion of the true catholic church which we may hope is to be found within the Romish church; and so *may* it be in the case of any other part of the nominal catholic church. And what is true in this respect, in the case of each part taken separately, will be true of the whole viewed as a whole.

Nevertheless, though he is unable to inform us who constitute

"the catholic church," viewed as an infallible guide, and whether it may not after all be a scattered body of individuals not traceable *as a body* by the eyes of men, yet he cannot persuade himself, as he ingenuously confesses, to give up his view as one not reducible to practice, and therefore proceeds to assert a claim in favour of our own church being considered by "Anglicans" as the representative of that church, and entitled to the same obedience. "To follow *the church* in this day is to follow the Prayer-book." (p. 313.—See the whole of pp. 310—17.) Now, in all the expressions of respect, veneration, and attachment which he applies to our church, I most cordially agree. Were it his object to recommend that church to the affections of the nation as a holy, scriptural, catholic, and apostolical church, and to warn the sects that have departed from her communion of the guilt of separation for matters *confessedly* not affecting the fundamentals of the faith—were this, I say, his only object, most cordially would I welcome his efforts. But when he places her upon an eminence to which she has no rightful claim, and to which, notwithstanding the argument, may I not say puerile argument, raised from her 20th Article, and adoption of the Athanasian Creed, I will venture to say she offers no claim; when, in her name, he demands obedience to her as infallible in all fundamental points of faith, and limits the right of private judgment to points beyond the limits of what she receives as fundamental, then surely it becomes those of her members who do not embrace such doctrine, nor believe it to be hers, to raise their protest against such, as it appears to them, dangerous delusions.

The difference between these views and those of the Romish church is merely this,—that the Romish church, considering herself to be "the catholic church," (so that she avoids the inconsistency of Mr. Newman, who makes what he acknowledges to be but a part equivalent to the whole,) asserts that she is infallible not merely in the fundamentals of the faith, but in all her decisions, and therefore limits the right of private judgment to those points upon which she has not decided; while Mr. Newman considers the church infallible only in the fundamentals, and therefore seems to allow private judgment somewhat greater scope. (See pp. 232, and 252, 3.) But even here, I suspect, the difference is rather nominal than real. For he says, "The church enforces a fact—apostolical tradition—as the doctrinal key to Scripture, and private judgment expatiates beyond the limits of *that tradition*." (p. 225.) Now he certainly does not limit that "tradition" to the fundamental points; and if not, this is tantamount to what Rome says, for she claims no power for the church of adding to the faith once delivered by the apostles, but only of "enforcing" the truths handed down by "apostolical tradition;"

and such tradition as is witnessed to in the writings of the Fathers. The difference, then, would be merely this. Rome says that the church is *infallible*, through divine promise, in delivering *all* points as much as in delivering the fundamentals of the faith. Mr. Newman says that she is *not infallible*, except in the fundamentals, but, having an *obvious historical fact*, apostolical tradition, to guide her, she *cannot make a mistake*. A very nice distinction!

The advancement of such claims in behalf of our church appears to me calculated to do her essential disservice, and even to alienate the affections of many from her, if led to suppose that such are her principles. In my humble view they are totally opposed to her whole spirit and language.

Does she refer us to "tradition" as our teacher? So far from it, that she says in her "Exhortation" to her members "to the reading of Holy Scripture,"—"Let us diligently *search for the well of life in the books of the New and Old Testament*, and not run to the stinking puddles of men's traditions, devised by men's imagination, for our justification and salvation. For *in Holy Scripture is fully contained* what we ought to do and what to eschew, *what to believe*, what to love, and what to look for at God's hands at length." (Hom. 1.) Now, whatever may be the traditions here referred to, I put it to the common sense of any reader whether the direction here given to "search for the well of life in the books of the New and Old Testament. . . for *in Holy Scripture is fully contained* what we ought to believe," &c., is consistent with the direction that we are to learn the faith from "tradition," and make "tradition" a joint rule of faith with Scripture.

Does she hold that Scripture is so obscure that it needs "tradition" to interpret it? Nay, she says, "The humble man may search any truth boldly in the Scripture, without any danger of error. And if he be ignorant, he ought the more to read and to search Holy Scripture to bring him out of ignorance." Although many things in Scripture be spoken in obscure mysteries, yet there is nothing spoken under dark mysteries in one place, but the self-same thing in other places is spoken more familiarly and plainly to the capacity both of learned and unlearned. And those things in the Scripture that be *plain to understand and necessary for salvation*, every man's duty is to learn them, to print them in memory, and effectually to exercise them." (Hom. 1.)

Does she claim obedience to herself as infallible in all the fundamental points of faith, and forbid the exercise of private judgment upon those points, demanding that they should be believed upon her interpretation of Scripture as the witness of catholic tradition? What mean, then, her exhortations to her individual

members to "search for the well of life in the books of the Old and New Testament?" &c. She makes, therefore, no such presumptuous claim. Nay, more, she knows that she needs it not. In the humble confidence that her doctrines are agreeable to the written word of God, she exhorts her members to search for themselves in the Scriptures, resting satisfied that God's children will find her faith there.

But, on this point, that is, as to the views advocated by our church on these matters, I shall have occasion to speak at large in a future chapter.¹

Mr. Newman, I allow, makes this claim for the Church of England, on the ground of her having faithfully followed "catholic tradition." But, in the first place, this is a matter of opinion. Romanists deny it. Some of our own sectaries deny it. This cannot, therefore, be taken for granted, and those of us who are unable to compare her views with those of the primitive church are utterly unable to judge in the matter. Supposing it, however, to be granted that antiquity preponderates in her favour, which as a *matter of private opinion* we should have no hesitation in doing, then the question recurs, what is the value of the patristical tradition we possess in any point? Can we rate it higher as a positive testimony than as affording a probable or confirmatory argument for that which has been found in Scripture?

Such are the views which we are required to receive as exhibiting the doctrine of the Church of England upon these points, though, with singular inconsistency, it is allowed that this *middle path*, as it is called, "has never existed except on paper, it has never been reduced to practice." (p. 20.) "To take, for instance, the subject of private judgment; our theory here is neither Protestant nor Roman, and *has never been realized*." (p. 21.) "It still remains to be tried whether what is called Anglicanism, the religion of Andrews, Laud, Hammond, Butler, and Wilson, is capable of being professed, acted on, and maintained on a large sphere of action, and through a sufficient period." (p. 21.) "If the English Church has the mission, *hitherto unfulfilled*, of representing a theology Catholic but not Roman, here is an especial reason why her members should be on the watch for opportunities of bringing out and carrying into effect its distinctive character." (p. 24.) "The English doctrine is not embodied in any substantive form, or publicly recognised in its details." (p. 27.) "The middle path adopted by the English Church . . . has never been realized in any religious community, and thereby brought home to the mind through the senses." (pp. 153, 4.) Mr. Newman, conscious apparently of this inconsistency, attempts to give an explanation of it thus,—"That though Anglicanism is

¹ See chap. xi.

not practically reduced to system in its fulness, it does exist in all its parts in the *writings of our divines*, and in good measure is in actual operation, though with varying degrees of consistency and completeness, in *different places*," (p. 28,)—which explanation I leave with the reader. He adds, that in points not determined by the Prayer-book, or Thirty-nine Articles, or "episcopal authority," (the *Homilies*, be it observed, are carefully excluded,) we "are not left to ourselves to determine as we please, but have the guidance of our standard writers, and are bound to consult them, nay, *when they agree, to follow them*, but when they differ, to adjust or to choose between their opinions," (p. 29;) and to know which are our "standard writers," we are to observe that "there have ever been three principal parties in the Church of England, the Apostolical, the Latitudinarian, and the Puritan," (p. 23;) the apostolical being represented by a few whom our opponents *claim* as agreeing with them, such as Archbishop Laud and others, and the other two being "but modifications of Socinianism and Calvinism," (p. 23;) so that we have only to throw overboard all those who differ from the school of Laud, and the residue will represent the "apostolical" portion of the divines of the Church of England, the "standard writers." This process of elimination is doubtless very necessary to stamp the doctrine of Mr. Newman with the character of Anglicanism. Nay, I believe and hope to prove in a subsequent chapter, that we must eliminate most of these apostolicals also, to get at this result. And this process affords the shortest path imaginable to a conclusion, for no argument can be less complicated than this. Those divines that take my view of the subject are the apostolical portion of the divines of our church, the rest being either Latitudinarian or Puritan, and so "but modifications of Socinianism and Calvinism," and therefore clearly my system of doctrine is Anglicanism and the doctrine of the Church of England. That the apostolical portion has never been able to get its views acted upon in the church, is, I suppose, only a sad proof that during the whole three centuries of its existence as a reformed church, error has been triumphant, and therefore, in Mr. Newman's words, "is an especial reason why her members should be on the watch for opportunities of bringing out and carrying into effect" those views.

Thus Anglicanism and the doctrine of the Church of England is not what has been generally and publicly professed and acted upon by that church, but a theory existing (as it is supposed) in the writings of some of her principal divines; and the church is arraigned at Mr. Newman's bar for not having carried out this theory,—a theory which, as a church, she never recognized,—into practice.

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The inconsistency and presumption of all this are truly extraordinary.

Against such statements it is useless to argue, and therefore, with these few remarks to commend them to the *notice* of the reader, I leave them at his disposal.

Before we proceed, however, it is very necessary that we should point the reader's attention to a few passages in the works to which we have referred above, calculated to show him the absolute necessity of caution and reserve in the perusal of them. Those that are more closely connected with our subject I shall notice hereafter in their appropriate place; but I will give a few here, in order at once to show the reader that the statements of the Tractators are not to be received with that implicit confidence which their triumphant tone and assumed intimate acquaintance and agreement with the Fathers and ecclesiastical antiquity, and the divines of our church, seem to demand of us, and that in fact they may make very strange mis-statements and very extraordinary mistakes.

The first I would notice is one of considerable importance, and lying at the foundation of the system, i. e. the interpretation of that article of the Creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." "Christians," says Mr. Newman, "have a demand on their teachers for the meaning of the article of the Apostles' Creed, which binds them to faith in 'the Holy Catholic Church,' " (p. 7.); and consequently, to illustrate, as he thinks, that article, the "main object" of his Lectures "is to furnish an approximation in one or two points towards a correct theory of *the duties and office* of the church catholic;" to direct attention to points "connected with *the pastoral office* of the church." (pp. 8, 9.) And his doctrine on this subject is, that Christians are bound to exercise a "childlike reliance on" the church as "*the guide which is ordained by God to be the interpreter of his message.*" (p. 307, and see whole of Lect. XI.) The meaning, therefore, of this article of the Creed is evidently assumed to be, (as it has been before interpreted by Romanists,) "I believe what the Holy Catholic Church says," in accordance with the observation already quoted from Dr. Pusey, that "we owe . . . to the decisions of the church universal, faith;" and so far from any defence of this exposition being given, it is assumed as if it were universally acknowledged, and in one at least of the writers of this party I recollect having seen the accusation that those who opposed them could not believe one of the articles of the Creed! Now, if Mr. Newman and his party will just turn to that Exposition of the Creed which has been so sanctioned in our church as to be, I might almost say, of a secondary degree of *authority* in

it, they will find their whole edifice, so far as it is built upon this article of the Creed, to be utterly without foundation. "When I say [says Bishop Pearson] 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church,' I mean that **THERE IS A CHURCH** which is holy, and which **is catholic.**" "'Credo sanctam ecclesiam,' *I believe there is a holy church*; or 'Credo in sanctam ecclesiam,' is the same; nor does the particle *in*, added or subtracted, make any difference."

And so our learned Dr. Chaloner, in his Treatise on this Article against the Romanists, expressly refutes the interpretation given to it by the Tractators, particularly "from the word *catholic* in the Creed, which by the Tridentine catechism's own confession, signifying the flock as well as the pastors, and excluding no time, no persons, nor any condition of men, is not possible to be seen, nor capable to be heard, nor able to be consulted with; and therefore, according to the sense which the church believes in this place, it is *absurd* to conceive that these words, *credo ecclesiam*, I believe that *there is a church*, should be equivalent to these, *Credo ecclesie*, I yield faith and belief to the church."¹

This is not the place to enlarge upon the point, but I cannot help adding that in the confession of faith sent by Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, in his letter to Alexander, bishop of Constantinople, respecting Arius, and which Mr. Keble himself tells us is "evidently" "a paraphrase on the baptismal or apostolical creed then in use at Alexandria,"² this part of it runs thus:—"And in addition to this orthodox faith (*ὁρθὸν δόγμα*) respecting the Father and the Son, *as the Holy Scriptures teach us*, we confess (*ὁμολογοῦμεν*) one Holy Spirit, who renewed (*τε καίνοεν*) both the holy men of the Old Testament,³ and the divine teachers of the New Testament, and *one only catholic, namely the apostolical, church* [*i. e.* we confess], that shall never be destroyed."⁴

And so indeed the most antient exposition of the Creed which we have, namely that by Ruffinus, interprets it,—“Therefore they who are taught above to believe in one God under the mystery of the Trinity, ought also to believe this, that *there is one holy church.*”⁵

I think, then, I shall carry the reader with me when I say that any writer who deals thus with an article of the Creed

¹ Chaloner's *Credo Sanctum Eccles. Cathol.* ed. 1638. pp. 18, 19.

² Serm. App. p. 123.

³ The reader will note this passage as applying to a statement of Dr. Pusey and others on another subject.

⁴ Theodoret, Hist. Eccl. i. 3.

⁵ *Hi ergo qui supra in unum Deum credere docti sunt sub mysterio Trinitatis, credere etiam hoc debent unam esse sanctam ecclesiam.* Ruff. Expos. in Symb. in art. "Sanctam Ecclesiam."

ought to be read with very considerable caution. The error sought to be affixed to that Article is the very foundation of our opponents' system, viz. that our faith is due not to Scripture, but to what the decision of the universal church (a thing utterly unattainable) pronounces to be the meaning of Scripture, and lays down as the truth.

Another point, which it is impossible to pass over without notice, is the highly-coloured and exaggerated representation made by Mr. Newman of the views of what he calls popular Protestantism, i. e. Protestantism as it stands distinguished from his own system. Of the extraordinary statements made on this head I will give the reader a specimen.

And, first, of the "Protestant sects," of whom he says, "After whatever misgivings or reluctance, they seem to allow, or to be in the way to allow, that truth is but matter of opinion; that that is truth to each which each thinks to be truth, provided he sincerely and really thinks it; that the divinity of the Bible itself is the only thing that need be believed, and that its meaning varies with the individuals who receive it; that it has no one meaning to be ascertained as a matter of fact, but that *it may mean any thing, because it is said to mean so many things.*" [The very thing which Mr. Newman's own reasoning in many places assumes.] (p. 35.) And accuses them of an "adoption of the latitudinarian notion that one creed is as good as another." (p. 36.) Now, though I am not about to take up the defence of the Protestant sects, I cannot but express the pain and regret with which I read such sweeping misrepresentations of their views.

But they are not the only sufferers in this way, for in many other similar statements a large proportion of the clergy and members of the Church of England are evidently intended to be included; and the representation given of their views, under the title of "Popular Protestantism," on this subject, are such as these,—*"The external means of judging are such as Scripture, the existing church, tradition, catholicity, learning, antiquity, and the national faith. Popular Protestantism would DEPRIVE US OF ALL THESE EXTERNAL MEANS, except the text of Holy Scripture."* (p. 156.) *"A widely-extended shape of Protestantism in this country, and that which professes to be the most religious of all, maintains that though Scripture may seem to mean any thing in matters of faith to unassisted reason, yet that under the guidance of divine illumination it speaks but one doctrine, and is thus the instrument of the Holy Ghost in converting the soul. Starting from this fundamental article, its advocates speak as follows:—that Scripture is the only divine instrument given us, that every thing else is human," &c.*—(which, thank God, is very

true, but which is followed up by the following glaring misrepresentation;—“It follows, that to inquire about the early church, the consent of Fathers, unbroken testimonies, or councils, to inquire when the church first became corrupt, or to make the primitive writers a comment upon the inspired text, are but **MELANCHOLY AND PERNICIOUS FOLLIES.**” (pp. 191, 2.) “The *popular theory of rejecting all other HELPS*, and reading the Bible only.” (p. 200.) And this in a country where commentaries and biblical works, and all “helps” to the right interpretation of the Bible, are sought after with avidity! “*In the English church we shall hardly find ten or twenty neighbouring clergymen who agree together, and that, not in the non-essentials of religion, but as to what are its elementary and necessary doctrines; or as to the fact whether there are any necessary doctrines at all, any distinct and definite faith required for salvation.*” (pp. 394, 5.) Again; “I trust that the foregoing lectures have disposed us to take a more cheerful view of what the Protestantism of the day considers a hardship. *It considers it a hardship to have any thing clearly and distinctly told it in elucidation of Scripture doctrine, an infringement on its right of doubting, and mistaking, and labouring in vain.* And the violent effort to keep itself in this state of ignorance—this unnatural ‘stopping of its ears,’ and ‘throwing dust into the air’ after the pattern of those Jews who would not hear the voice of apostles and martyrs,—all this it dignifies by the title of defending the sacred right of private judgment, calls it a holy cause, a righteous battle, and other large and senseless epithets. But I trust that we have learned to glory in that which the world [i. e. “the Protestantism of the day,”] calls a bondage. We do boast and exult in bearing Christ’s yoke, whether of faith or of obedience, [which of course “the Protestantism of the day” does not]; and we consider his creed not as a tyrannical infliction, God forbid! or a jealous test, [as of course “the Protestantism of the day” does consider it]; but as a glorious privilege, which we are ready to battle and to suffer for, yea much more ready, so be it! through his grace, than they for their low, carnal, and despicable license to reject it.” (pp. 284, 5.)

And thus the whole body of his opponents are held up to the reader (according to the old artifice of the Romanists against the Protestants) as men that utterly despise the testimony of antiquity and the Fathers; and because they refuse to receive patristical tradition as a divine informant, are abused as persons who think it a hardship to have Scripture clearly explained to them, and look upon Christ’s creed as a tyrannical infliction, and are compared to those who stopped their ears when the apostles were speaking.

On such statements as these it is quite unnecessary to offer a remark, and therefore I will only say, that it is difficult to understand how Mr. Newman can suppose that they can have any other effect with persons at all well informed on the subject than to recoil with tenfold force upon their author. One can hardly, however, help remarking that Romish doctrines and Romish tactics generally go together.

I will give but one more extract in illustration of this point. "How very extravagant is the opposite notion now *so common*, that belief in the Bible is the sole or main condition for a man being considered a Christian! how very *unchristian* the title by which many men delight to designate themselves, turning good words into bad, as *Bible-christians*! We are all of us Bible-christians in one sense; but the term as actually used is unchristian, for the following reason,—directly it is assumed that the main condition of communion is the acceptance of the Bible as the word of God, doctrines of whatever sort become of but secondary importance." (p. 291.)

Now, I would ask Mr. Newman, as this doctrine—that the mere acceptance of the Bible as the word of God, independently of a consideration of the doctrines it may be held to support, is the main condition for a man being considered a Christian,—is "*so common*" among his opponents, to name a few worthy of notice who hold this doctrine. If he cannot do so, he must be content to be charged with a very grievous misrepresentation of their views. The fact is, (as he can hardly but be aware,) that the meaning of the great body of those who call themselves Bible-christians is nothing of the kind, for they hold, as much as Mr. Newman, that there are fundamental doctrines in Christianity, a belief of which is necessary. But the term is used to distinguish between those who hold that the Bible only is a divine informant, and those who hold that there is another divine informant besides the Bible. And thus the Romanists have made use of it as a term of reproach for the Protestants, as holding that the Bible *alone* is the rule of faith; a reproach which Mr. Newman and his party seem most desirous to show is inapplicable to them, but which our excellent Archbishop Tenison will tell them ought to be very differently met by us, and received *not as a reproach but an honour*. "The faith of the reformed," says the Archbishop, "has by some of their adversaries of the Roman persuasion been called *Biblistm*: and they themselves have had the name of *Biblists* given to them. And those they look upon as names of honour, though they were intended as marks of infamy by the inventors of them: for it is both a safe and a worthy practice, to take for their rule the Word of God rather than the word of man. That was the rule which Christ left to his church, and the judicious

and sincere Christians of all ages have governed themselves by it; for they have believed, as Athanasius did, 'That the Holy and Divine Scriptures are of themselves sufficient for showing the truth.'"¹

I hope, therefore, that we may still take leave to "delight in the name" of *Biblists* and *Bible-christians*, as distinguishing us from those who hold such doctrines as that advocated by the Tractators; and that Mr. Newman will hesitate before he again misrepresents as he has done those who do delight in that name.

It is worthy of remark also, that while the mouths of individuals arguing from *the Bible* are to be stopped, one who argues from the testimony of "*Tradition*," or what appears to him to be so, may raise his voice against the whole church. "We," it is added, "make it every individual's prerogative to maintain and defend *the Creed* . . . The humblest and meanest among Christians may defend the faith against the whole church, if the need arise;" and the way in which this individual is to ascertain that his interpretation of the Creed is right, is "to ascertain the fact what is the meaning of the Creed in particular points, since matter of opinion it is not, any more than the history of the rise and spread of Christianity itself," as if the Creed was not open as much to variety of interpretation as the Scripture. This surely comes particularly unfortunately after such an exposition of an article of the Creed as we have had to notice above by one who is such an admirer and student of antiquity as Mr. Newman. And how this doctrine is to be reconciled with his statements in other parts respecting our duty to follow the church as the keeper and witness of catholic tradition, is inconceivable.

It is very painful to have to deal with such mis-statements. To expose their unfairness sufficiently without appearing to insinuate wilful misrepresentation, (which in this case I am far from wishing to do,) is most difficult.

Does he really suppose that because some hot-headed and ill-informed men may have chosen to talk nonsense, he is justified in thus vituperating (for it is nothing less) that large body of his brethren in the church, as well as those out of the church, who oppose his views? Mr. Newman knows well the effect upon the popular mind of such a representation of the views of an antagonist as shall lead them to conclude that he is in the extremes of absurdity and fanaticism. But such statements savour much more of party zeal and special pleading than of Christian candour and the upright defence of a good cause. He must be perfectly conscious that his views are strenuously opposed by men to whom the sentiments which he has here attributed to his opponents would be as objectionable as they can be to himself.

¹ Popery not founded on Scripture. London, 1688, 4to. *Introduction*, p. 5. The *Introduction* was written by Tenison, the rest of the volume by others.

The same unfair mode of arguing is adopted by Mr. Keble, though not certainly to the same extent. All his remarks tend to make the reader suppose that those who oppose *his view* of the value of "tradition," antiquity, and the Fathers, deny that they have *any value at all*. Thus, after having observed, "We love not to allow that in any sense we *rest our faith and practice upon tradition*," he immediately adds, "and . . . objections the most contradictory are brought to justify this our *determined disregard of antiquity*;" as if there was no medium between "resting our faith and practice upon tradition," and a "determined disregard of antiquity." (p. 39, and see similar remarks, pp. 74, 87, &c.) Now this is a loose and *ad captandum* style of argument which may deceive many readers, but to one who looks for an accurate and judicious treatment of the subject, it betrays a bias and prejudiced state of mind very far from satisfactory.

Take, also, the following instance:—"Our ultra-Protestant," says the author of Tract 81, "would consistently reject the doctrine of the sacrifice, (as he would the rite of infant baptism,) because there is no *explicit* authority for it in Holy Scripture, *no statement of it totidem verbis*; the Anglican divine must receive it as the doctrine of the church catholic coinciding with *hints of Holy Scripture*."¹

The writer of this was, or ought to have been, perfectly aware that the persons to whom he applies the name of "Ultra-Protestants," do not hold the necessity of a statement of doctrine *totidem verbis* in Scripture, but that a doctrine should follow by necessary consequence from what is stated in Scripture. The reader will also observe what in our opponent's view is the Anglican doctrine on this subject, namely, that we are bound to receive as "the doctrine of the church catholic," whatever is stated by certain Fathers, and has "*hints*" of Holy Scripture in its favour.

But in truth there is a great deal of haste (to use no harsher term) displayed by our opponents in more than one respect in their endeavours to propagate their views, which has led to very much and very grievous misrepresentation of the sentiments, not only of those whom they oppose, but of those whom they would fain make the reader think are their friends, that is, the great majority of our best divines,—*a misrepresentation which has been the mainstay of their cause*. Men who have in the most clear, explicit and direct terms opposed the view they advocate, are coolly and deliberately quoted by them as the supporters of their scheme, even in the very works in which it is repudiated. To give but one instance. They themselves refer to the famous

¹ Tract 81, pp. 28, 9.

rule of Vincentius as the groundwork of their scheme on the subject of "tradition," making that rule the certain test of truth, and endeavouring to persuade us that thus it had been considered by all our great English divines; referring, among others, to the learned Bishop Stillingfleet, especially his work on "The Grounds of Protestant Religion," who in that very work says,—*"Wise men who have thoroughly considered of Vincentius his way, though in general they cannot but approve of it so far as to think it highly improbable, that there should be antiquity, universality, and consent, against the true and genuine sense of Scripture, yet when they consider this way of Vincentius, with all those cautions, restrictions and limitations set down by him, (l. i. c. 39,) they are apt to think that he hath PUT MEN TO A WILD-GOOSE CHASE TO FIND OUT ANY THING ACCORDING TO HIS RULES; and that St. Augustine spake a great deal more to the purpose when he spake concerning ALL the writers of the church, 'that although they had never so much learning and sanctity he did not think it true because they thought so, but because they persuaded him to believe it true, either from the authority of Scripture or some probable reason.'*" (p. 279, ed. 1665.) And in another part, he shows *"how little certainty"* there is *"in his way of finding out traditions."* (p. 247.) Now this rule is put forth by our opponents as the test of "apostolical tradition," and that which is supposed to stand this test is a divine informant, having authority over our consciences as supplementary to, and interpretative of Scripture, and of this view Bishop Stillingfleet is continually quoted as the supporter, even from the very work from which we have given the above extracts.

Other instances of this the reader shall have in abundance hereafter.

Further, let us inquire how far their accuracy may be relied upon in their statements respecting antiquity and the views and doctrines of the Fathers, where the reader might suppose from *the tone they have assumed*, that their knowledge was of the most perfect kind, and that their statements were the result of long study and intimate acquaintance with the records of antiquity.

What does the reader think of the following passage?—*"The baptismal confessions recorded in the Acts are of this nature, 'I believe that Jesus is the Son of God,'—'I believe in Jesus Christ,' and the like. But this elementary confession, thus brief and incomplete as far as the express words went, seems even before the Apostles' death to have been expanded and moulded into form, and in that form or type it has remained up to this day in the baptismal service. I say this was done in the apostles' days, because history bears witness to the fact, calling it 'the Creed,' 'the Apostles' Creed,' the treasure*

and legacy of faith which the apostles had left to their converts, and which was to be preserved in the church to the end. Indeed, St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, *so speaks of it*, when *quoting part of it*, viz. as that which had been committed to him, and which he had committed in turn to his converts, (1 Cor. xv. 3.)" (pp. 260, 261.) This brief mode of settling every thing is quite amusing. The Creed which we now have was certainly put into its present form by the apostles, *for* some writers who lived long after (for that is all the testimony we have) call it the Apostles' Creed, and if this be not a sufficient proof, remember St. Paul himself has *quoted it* in 1 Cor. xv. 3, though he does not say so.

Such a statement as this at the present day is really extraordinary; more especially from one who professes an intimate acquaintance with antiquity. But it is merely an echo of the statements of some Romish writers; and statements, be it remembered, which are repudiated by the more learned members even of that church. On this point, however, we shall have to speak at large in another place, to which therefore I refer the reader. (See c. 4.)

Let us now see how far we may depend upon the correctness of their quotations from the Fathers. It is a favourite observation with Mr. Newman and Mr. Keble, that "Tradition teaches, Scripture proves." On the correctness or incorrectness of this observation I say nothing here. My only concern now is with the following quotation from Athanasius introduced in proof of it. "Athanasius," says Mr. Newman, "in the following passage, distinguishes between Tradition as teaching, and Scripture as proving, verifying doctrine. 'Our faith is correct, and is *derived* from Apostolical teaching and the Tradition of the Fathers, *being established* out of the New and Old Testaments.' (Ad Adelph. §. 6.)" (p. 385.) Mr. Keble, still more boldly shaping the passage to his own mind, says,—“St. Athanasius more than once mentions a certain ‘form or stamp of the faith of a Christian,’ by recurrence to which doctrines may be best tried, and heresy repressed; *and this form or stamp, he says, we receive by tradition, but are able to demonstrate it by the Scriptures.* Ep. ad Adelph. tom. i. 914, E.;" adding *part* of the sentence in the original. (p. 124.) And in the next page he gives us this *translation* of the portion he refers to,—“‘To us belongs the right faith, *setting out from the apostolical teaching and tradition of the Fathers, and confirmed* both by the New and Old Testament.’ Could he have said more clearly, ‘Tradition teaches, Scripture proves?’” (p. 125.)

Now this passage *with its context* stands thus;—Ἡμεῖς δὲ ἡ πρὸς τοὺς ἱεροὺς καὶ ἐκ διδασκαλίας Ἀποστόλων (ὅτι, Ἀποστολικῆς) ὁρμή-

μνη και παραδοσις των πατρων βιβαιουμνη κ τ νιας και παλαιας δια-
 θικης των μνη προφητων λεγοντων Αποστείλοι τον Λογον σου και την αληθειαν
 σου και ιδου η Παρθενος εν γαστρι εξει η δε Αποστολων παρα-
 δοσις διδασκει, του μνη Πιτρου λεγοντος Χριστου ουι υπερ ημων παθοτος
 σαρκι [1 Pet. iv. 1.] του δε Παυλου γραφοντος, Προσδεχαμνοι την μακαριαν
 ελπιδα [Tit. ii. 13.]. Ep. ad Adelph.

I give the portion of this passage, quoted by Mr. Newman and Mr. Keble, stopped as in the editions preceding the Benedictine and supported by the authority of the learned Peter Nannius, a *Roman Catholic* Professor at Louvain,¹ I translate it thus,—
 “But our faith is the orthodox faith, both taking its rise from the teaching of the Apostles, and confirmed by the tradition of the Fathers, derived both from the New and Old Testament; the prophets saying, Send out thy Word and thy Truth, and, Behold a virgin shall be with child, &c.; and *the tradition of the apostles* teaches us, Peter saying, ‘Christ therefore having suffered for us in the flesh,’ and Paul writing, ‘Looking for that blessed hope, &c.’”

This passage, however, the Benedictine editors have stopped so as to make it, if possible, speak the views of Romanism, by inserting a comma after *πατρων*, and thus connecting *βιβαιουμνη* with what follows, and translating the passage according to this punctuation. Mr. Newman and Mr. Keble have followed in their wake; the latter having even gone so far as to translate the passage, “*the apostolical teaching and tradition of the Fathers*,” as if it referred to *the apostolical teaching of the Fathers*, a translation which the very position of the words wholly forbids. Indeed I do not believe that they can point out any passage in the Fathers in which the words, “the teaching of the apostles,” or “the apostolical teaching,” are put for the report we derive of that teaching from the Fathers. Now whether the *new* Benedictine punctuation be correct or not, it is unnecessary here to inquire, though it seems to me quite inconsistent with the construction of the sentence. It is sufficient to observe, that the immediate *context* shows what Athanasius means by “*the teaching of the apostles*,” viz. that which “*the TRADITION of the apostles TEACHES us*,” in their *writings*, the very passages from Peter and Paul to which he refers as “*the tradition of the apostles*” being pointed out; and therefore that the sense put upon his words by Mr. Newman and Mr. Keble is far from what he intended. But it is an old quotation of the Romanists against us, from whom our opponents appear to have borrowed it without even consulting the context.²

¹ Nostra contra fides recta est, et ex doctrina Apostolica et traditione Patrum confirmata, et Novo et Veteri Testamento, cum et Prophetis clamant, &c. See edition of Athanasius, published, Colon. 1686. vol. i. p. 159.

² The passage, according to the old punctuation, is precisely accordant with

The observation of Mr. Keble as to *a certain form or stamp of faith* being here referred to, and said to be received by tradition, is perfectly unaccountable, for neither in the passage or the context is there any thing of the kind, and not the less remarkable from his placing *a few words* of the Greek original at the foot of his page, as if he had really found his assertion in the original. Indeed Mr. Keble himself, referring to the same passage in the next page, tells us that the terms in question do not occur there. But unfortunately, again forgetting this, he in the following page recurs to his first assertion as correct, and makes it of considerable use to his argument, observing, "This same 'form of the faith,' *for which as we have seen Athanasius looked to tradition*, he affirms elsewhere to have been," &c. (p. 126.)

Poor Athanasius! This is indeed hard treatment of one who in every page with laborious reiteration refers to Scripture as that from which every individual is to satisfy himself of the truth. It is quite astonishing, indeed, how any one at all acquainted with the works of Athanasius can suppose that he is adducible in favour of the views advanced by Mr. Newman and Mr. Keble.

The reader will observe that in this passage of Athanasius the Scriptures of the apostles are called "the *tradition* of the apostles." The word *tradition* is constantly used by the Fathers in this sense, i. e. as significative of *the Scriptures*, and this, as may be supposed, has given rise to many perversions of their meaning, which makes it very necessary for us to be on our guard against being misled by scraps selected from their writings, in which the word tradition occurs, and which are adduced in proof of the value of ecclesiastical tradition, when in fact they are applicable only to the *Scriptural* tradition.

Thus Athanasius says,—“He that abides by *the traditions* (τοις παραδοσιςι,) is safe. And we exhort you, as we exhort ourselves, to preserve *the faith that has been delivered to us*, (την παραδοσιν πιστει,) the traditional faith.”) What a strong passage, it might be said, in favour of *tradition*! And thus it has been

the view we defend, for that “the tradition of the Fathers” is a *confirmatory* argument for the truth of a doctrine derived from Scripture is what we maintain, and this is all for which this passage could be adduced. I would just observe also, that the word πατρων is sometimes used for the writers of the Old Testament, a sense which would well suit the construction of this sentence. It is so used by Hippolytus the Martyr, who, speaking of the prophets, says, *ἔντοι γὰρ πνευματικῶς ὡς πατρὶς καθήκοντες*. (De Antichristo, §. 2. Op. ed. Fabr. 1716—18. vol. i. p. 5.) The word is also used in a very similar sense, i. e. of the writers of the Holy Scriptures generally, by Cyril of Alexandria, who speaks of those writings as, *αἱ τῶν ἁγίων πατρῶν συγγραφαί*. (De S. Trin. Dial. i. Op. Tom. 5. P. l. p. 388.) And by Cyril of Jerusalem, *ὁμοῖον δὲ αἱ τὰς θείας γραφὰς ἐκτελέουσαι, καὶ πνευματικὰ ὡς πατρὶς καθήκοντες*. Cat. 16. §. 5. ed. Mille. p. 228.

quoted by the Romanists. But when we take it with its context, we find that nothing is less meant than patristical tradition. It is the tradition of Scripture, which alone is referred to, and the expression "THE traditions," as thus applied, shows that the term was more especially descriptive of Scripture.

The whole passage stands thus,—“For things great and difficult of apprehension are received by faith in God. Whence they who have weak intellects fall away, unless they should be persuaded to abide in the faith, and avoid idle questions. Wherefore the blessed Paul said, ‘Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, *God was manifest in the flesh,*’ &c. Since therefore we have heard that some among you are troubled, and desire letters from us concerning the common faith, which was *introduced by the apostles*, we write, that to search curiously into it is the duty of few, but to hold the faith, of all who would obey God. For he who searches into things which are above his ability is in imminent danger, but he who abides by *the traditions* is safe. And we exhort you, as we exhort ourselves, to keep *the faith that has been delivered to us*, and to turn away from profane novelties of speech, and to enjoin this upon all, that they should fear to institute curious inquiries respecting so great a mystery, and confess that *God has been manifest in the flesh* according to *the apostolical tradition* (τῇ Ἀποστολικῇ παραδόσει).” De incarn. Verbi Dei, *init.*

The whole passage is well worthy of notice, not only as showing the patristical use of the word *tradition*, but also as showing the different view which Athanasius took of the use of Scripture to that which Mr. Newman advocates. The sum and substance of this passage is, that it is the duty of the man of *weak intellect* to go to Scripture, the scriptural tradition, and keep the faith as **THERE** delivered to us.

There is also another passage where both Mr. Newman and Mr. Keble have allowed themselves to follow an alteration slipped *without notice* into the punctuation of the text of Athanasius by the Benedictine Editors, where the sense is materially changed in favour of Romish doctrine, and, moreover, the construction of the sentence unwarrantably tampered with. The passage is in the letter to Epictetus, and relates to those who were propagating the Apollinarian heresy, and is thus translated by Mr. Newman, “They ought to receive this answer and nothing beyond, ‘It is enough that these are not the doctrines of the church nor of the Fathers.’” (p. 387.) Mr. Keble’s translation is in effect precisely the same. (p. 128.) And then the passage is adduced as a proof of the *sufficiency* of church-tradition to satisfy the mind of the truth of a doctrine.

Now the passage as it stands in *all* the editions preceding the

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Benedictine reads thus;—Τα γὰρ οὕτω φανερὰ διατυμμενα φανλα, γυμναζον ἐπὶ πλείον καὶ περιργαζέσθαι οὐ δεῖ, ἵνα μὴ τοῖς φιλομυκοῦσιν ὡς ἀμφιβολὰ νομισθῇ ἢ τοῦτο μόνον ἀποκρινασθαι πρὸς τὰ τοιαῦτα, καὶ ἔπειτα ἀρκεῖ, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτα τῆς Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, οὐδὲ ταῦτα οἱ πατέρες ἔφρονησαν.¹ i. e. "For doctrines which are so manifestly unsound it is not right to expose more to view and make much of, lest they should be considered by men who love to dispute as doubtful points; or [i. e. or if you argue at all against them] it is sufficient to give this answer only to such things, and to say, that these are not the doctrines of the catholic church, nor was this the mind of the Fathers."

Athanasius here very wisely no doubt advises *the bishop to whom he was writing*, not to hold disputes with those under him concerning doctrines manifestly heretical, lest they should be thought debateable points, but to say at once, These are not the doctrines of the catholic church, and, therefore, I cannot allow them to be publicly disputed about by those who are in the communion of the church. But the Benedictine Editors by silently altering the punctuation thus, καὶ εἰπω Ἀρκεῖ ὅτι κ. τ. λ. (leaving no verb, be it observed, to the infinitives ἀποκρινασθαι and εἰπω) have thought to make Athanasius advise the bishop to tell the heretics with whom he had to deal, that this was a SUFFICIENT proof against their doctrine, that it was not the *true* doctrine. This *emendation* of the punctuation of Athanasius, Mr. Newman and Mr. Keble have implicitly followed, and from it deduce a sentiment completely opposite to the whole tenor of his writings. I do not charge them with any *unfairness* in this, because they were probably not aware of the alteration, but it shows the necessity of narrowly examining their quotations. And I must be allowed to add, that there is another part of the same quotation where it is not quite so easy to acquit them of partiality in their translation. Why does Mr. Newman translate the words τῇ εὐσεβῇ πίστει, "the reverent faith of the church?" (p. 386.) And Mr. Keble, "the Creed of the true religion?" (p. 127.) Why this partial translation to suit their own peculiar views? The words are merely "the orthodox faith." Mr. Keble's rendering, moreover, is peculiarly unfortunate, implying that the heretics were to be silenced by "the Creed," when in the words immediately preceding it is stated, that the heretics in question boasted of their adherence to the Nicene Creed. Nor is there any reason why the words "the orthodox faith" here should not mean the same as "the faith that has been delivered to us" in the last passage, where the words had a direct reference to *Scripture*.

¹ Epist. ad Epict. prope init. ed. Col. 1686. tom. i. p. 584. See Ben. ed. tom. i. p. 903.

Further, what is the meaning of the phrase "the Fathers" in this passage? It refers exclusively to *the Fathers assembled at the Council of Nice*, (as any reader of the context will see at once, and as the phrase is often used both by Athanasius and others,) to whose sentiments Athanasius refers as sufficient for the occasion, because the church in which these disputes were, and indeed the disputants themselves, professed to receive their Creed; just as in the Church of England it would be a sufficient answer for a private bishop to make to any disputants upon points settled by the public confession of the church, to say, I cannot allow these matters to be disputed about by you who profess to be members of the church, as if they were debateable points, when the church has already determined them and made the reception of them essential to communion with her.

And hence we may observe, that even admitting the Benedictine punctuation, the passage is not necessarily favourable to the views of our opponents; because the *sufficiency* of the testimony spoken of would refer not to its sufficiency for the establishment of the truth in the abstract, but to its sufficiency for the termination of the disputes spoken of.

This passage, then, leaves the question between us and the Tractators utterly untouched.

We have already observed,¹ that the word *tradition* is frequently used by the Fathers to denote Scripture, sometimes *alone*, but more frequently connected with some word descriptive of its author. Thus the Scriptural tradition of the New Testament is sometimes called *the Apostolical tradition*, which refers to the Acts and Epistles of the New Testament, and sometimes *the Evangelical tradition*, significative of the Gospels of the Evangelists, these two parts of the New Testament being generally distinguished from each other by the early Fathers. On this subject we shall have to speak more fully in another place, but I just notice it again here partly in order to put the reader on his guard on so important a point, and partly as introductory to the next passage to which I have to call his attention in the work of Mr. Newman,—a passage which, coming as it does from one who professes so intimate an acquaintance with the writings of the Fathers, is indeed most strange. But it quite explains how it is that he thinks the Fathers such defenders of "tradition."

The passage is as follows:—"He [i. e. Athanasius] concludes with these words, in which *the same distinction is made as has already been pointed out between THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH as an antecedent argument, a fair plea*, ORDINARILY SUPERSUADING INQUIRY, and, on the other hand, when for one reason or

¹ See pp. 18, 23 and 64.

another the inquiry has proceeded, Scripture as the only basis of sound argument and conclusion. 'I have written the above, beloved, though really it was unnecessary, for *the Evangelical tradition* is sufficient by itself; but since you asked concerning our faith, and because of those who are desirous of trifling with their theories, and do not consider that he who speaks out of his private judgment speaks a lie, for neither the comeliness nor the glory of the Lord's human body can be adequately expressed by the wit of man, but we speak so far as we are able, viz. confess what has been done, as it is in Scripture, and to worship the true and living God, for the glory and acknowledgment of his love towards man,' &c. (Contr. Apollin. i. 9, 11, 22, fin.)" (p. 388.)

Mr. Newman, therefore, would have us suppose that the phrase *ἡ Ευαγγελικὴ παράδοσις*, *the Evangelical tradition*, means *the tradition of the church*, and upon this extraordinary mistake founds the observation that from this passage it is clear that Athanasius thought that the tradition of the church is an antecedent argument *ordinarily superseding inquiry*. If, then, it should turn out that "the Evangelical tradition" means Scripture, why then, upon Mr. Newman's own showing, it is the opinion of Athanasius that *Scripture* is the antecedent argument *ordinarily superseding further inquiry*.

Whatever "the Evangelical tradition" may be, it is clearly the opinion of Athanasius, that it is "SUFFICIENT BY ITSELF" (*αὐτάρκης*) to teach the faith.

Now the fact is, that this phrase is a *common* phrase with the Fathers for *the Gospels*, *the tradition of the Evangelists*, as distinguished from *the Acts and Epistles*, which they call *the tradition of the Apostles* or *the Apostolical tradition*.

Thus Gregory Nyssen;—"But the argument from the inspired volume upon the point in question each one may gather abundantly from both Testaments. For many may easily be found in the prophets and the law, and many both in *the Evangelical and Apostolical traditions*," (*ἡ Ευαγγελικαὶ τε καὶ Ἀποστολικαὶ παράδοσις*). De Virg. c. xi. ed. Par. 1615. tom. p. 579.

So Cyril of Alexandria;—"He would have them be gentle and patient, according to the Evangelical traditions" (*ταῖς Ευαγγελικαῖς παραδοσίς*.) In Isa. c. lxvi. ver. 5.

Other examples occur in Socrates, Hist. Eccl. lib. ii. c. 7, and in Balsamon ad. Can. 6. Concil. Nic. Sec.

And so Cyprian says, "Whence is that tradition? Does it descend from Dominical and Evangelical authority, or does it come from the commands and epistles of the Apostles? For God testifies that those things are to be done which are *written* If, therefore, either it is commanded in the Gospel, or is contained in the Epistles or Acts of the Apostles let that

divine and holy tradition be observed If in any thing the truth has not been steadily maintained, let us return to the Dominical original and *the Evangelical and Apostolical tradition.*" (Ad originem Dominicam et Evangelicam et Apostolicam traditionem revertamur.) Epist. 74. ad Pomp.

And what is still more conclusive, if possible, we find Jerome, when translating a passage of Polycrates, translating the words *το ευαγγελιον*, *the Gospel*, (referring to *Scripture*, by "*evangelica traditio*," *the Evangelical tradition.*"

Indeed, I would ask Mr. Newman where he can find the phrase used in the early Fathers to mean any thing else.

So that "*the Evangelical tradition*" means the Gospels, and the passage of Athanasius recoils with no little force upon Mr. Newman's own hypothesis. The very context, indeed, shows that the *Scripture* is referred to, and in the next treatise we find more than once a phrase precisely similar, viz. *ἡ Ευαγγελικὴ ὁρὴ*, *the Evangelical rule*, used to express *the Gospels*. (De salut. adv. Christi adv. Apoll. or Lib. sec. adv. Apoll.) And in the Treatise "*De pass. et cruce Dom.*" attributed to him, we find the phrases *ἡ ἀποστολικὴ λόγος*, "*the apostolical saying*," applied to a quotation from the Epistle to the Romans; *το Ευαγγελικὸν τοῦ Κυρίου ῥητος*, "*the evangelical saying of our Lord*," i. e. "*the saying of our Lord in the Gospels*," applied to a quotation from St. Matthew. And so the author of the *Quæstiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos* (in the works of Justin Martyr) uses the phrase *Ευαγγελικαὶ διηγήσεις*, "*the evangelical narratives*," for the Gospels. (Ed. Col. p. 484.) And Rufinus,—"Propterea ergo Prophetis et Evangelicis atque Apostolicis vocibus nobis prænunciatur hic error." (Expos. in Symb.;) that is,—"*Moreover this error is foretold to us in the Prophetical and Evangelical and Apostolical words.*" And as to the sentiment here expressed, we need go no further than the very first page of Athanasius's works, to see its conformity with the views he has maintained elsewhere. "*As you desire*," he says to the person whom he was addressing, "*to hear me discourse respecting the faith, we will, as far as we are able, expound the Christian faith, which indeed you might have found from the divine oracles*, (*διαμαρτυροῦν ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων λόγων ἑνῶν*;) but politely desire to hear from others. *For the holy and inspired Scriptures are sufficient of themselves* (*αὐταρκεῖς*) *to deliver the truth*, (*πρὸς τὴν τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπαγγελίαν*.)"¹

Before we quit this passage, the reader should also notice another point, viz. the translation, "*he who speaks out of his pri-*

¹ See Routh, Reliq. Sacr. vol. i. p. 371.

² Orat. contr. gent. ed. Ben. tom. i. p. 1.

vate judgment speaks a lie." The introduction of the term "private judgment" here is *totally unauthorized by the original*, which is ὁ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλῶν, *he who speaks out of his own private fancies*, and refers to the word translated by Mr. Newman "theories" (εἰσαγγελίαι; *inventions*;) which had just gone before. The two phrases, as Mr. Newman must see, are totally different. The temptation no doubt was great to get a sly hit at the right of private judgment out of Athanasius, but this strikes one as a somewhat unscrupulous method of obtaining it. I hope these are not specimens of the sort of translations of the Fathers we have been lately promised.¹

There is one thing more with which the reader ought to be acquainted before we proceed, viz. the *practical* meaning which our opponents give to "catholic consent;" and what is considered by them as a sufficient proof that any thing has been held "always, everywhere, and by all." Mr. Keble thinks that from tradition "we know with tolerable certainty that Melchisedek's feast is a type of the blessed eucharist." What is the proof? "For this," he says, "see S. Cyprian, ep. 63, p. 149, ed. Fell; S. Augustin, De Civ. Dei. xviii. 20; S. Jerome, Ep. ad Marcel- lam, t. i. p. 123, ed. Frob. Basil. These, with the distinct acknowledgment in the antient Roman liturgy, may perhaps be considered sufficient to represent the sense of the Western churches. Among the Greeks, S. Chrysostom on Gen. xiv. clearly *implies* the same construction. But the reserve maintained by them on all liturgical subjects may account for their *comparative silence* on this point, even supposing them to have received the same interpretation." (p. 36.) Such is a specimen of the consent that gives "*knowledge with tolerable certainty*." And doctrines and statements so supported are to be published to the church as indubitable apostolical traditions.

But, in truth, when we come to see what the notion of our opponents is as to the nature of faith, the view to which their system has driven them as to the character of the evidence upon which faith is built, we shall feel less surprised at such statements. It is almost impossible not to see that in patristical tradition there is *at least* a degree of *uncertainty* as to its apostolical origin; and consequently that there can be *at most* only some degree of *probability* for faith to rest upon in such testimony. Our opponents have clearly seen this, and hence, instead of being deterred hereby from adopting it as a fit and adequate foundation for faith, they have coolly and deliberately set about to show that faith can never have more than probability to rest

¹ That their translations are not always to be trusted in points where they are interested has been fully shown by an able writer in the British Magazine for May 1839, pp. 511—19.

upon, and that in fact if there was certainty there could not be faith, as if faith was belief on insufficient grounds. "We, for our part, [says Mr. Newman] have been taught to consider that faith in its degree as well as conduct must be guided by probabilities, and that *doubt is ever our portion in this life*. We can bear to confess that other systems have their unanswerable arguments in matters of detail, and that we are but *striking a balance between difficulties existing on both sides*, that we are following as the voice of God what ON THE WHOLE we have reason to think such." (p. 129.) "According to English [!] principles, faith has *all it needs* in knowing that God is our Creator and Preserver, and that he MAY, IF IT SO HAPPEN, have spoken *Doubt may even be said to be implied in a Christian's faith*." (p. 103.) Nay, saith Mr. Keble, "*evidence complete in all its parts leaves no room for faith*." (p. 82.) And to put an end to all doubt as to the doctrine they hold on this subject, Mr. Newman openly tells us, that "*to accept revelation at all*" "*we have but probability to show* AT MOST, NAY, TO BELIEVE IN THE EXISTENCE OF AN INTELLIGENT CREATOR." (p. 69.)

Such is the conclusion to which the views of our opponents on "tradition" have led them, and which it seems they can not only contemplate with unconcern, but commend to the adoption of their readers. The authority of "tradition" as a divine informant is, it appears, at all hazards to be maintained. The reader may here see the doctrine to which the maintenance of such views confessedly leads. In this place I make no further observation upon it than to commend it to his serious attention, but shall take an opportunity to consider it more fully hereafter.

Having thus, I hope, given the reader sufficient proofs of the necessity of being at least on his guard in the perusal of these works, and that even in points where he might have least expected it, I proceed in the next chapter to show the identity of the doctrine of our opponents on this subject with that of the Romanists.

CHAPTER III.

COMPARISON OF THE DOCTRINE MAINTAINED IN THE WORKS ABOVE MENTIONED ON THE SUBJECT OF PATRISTICAL TRADITION WITH THAT OF THE ROMISH CHURCH.

AFTER the explicit declaration of Dr. Pusey, quoted in the preceding chapter, that our controversy with Rome on this subject is not a doctrinal but a "*purely* HISTORICAL" controversy, i. e. relating only to the validity of some particular traditions, and also some intimations of a very similar kind from Mr. Newman, such as that "we agree with the Romanist in appealing to antiquity as our *great teacher*," (p. 47,) it may seem almost superfluous to attempt to prove the identity of the doctrine maintained by the writers whose views we have been considering, with that of the Romanists. As, however, in other places they speak as if there was some not inconsiderable difference between their views and those of the Romanists on the subject, and as such an impression is likely to be entertained almost involuntarily by their readers, from the fact of their being ministers of the Church of England, it is desirable to show that the doctrines of the two parties *are* precisely the same.

The reader will bear in mind that I am not now speaking of the traditions received by either party, but of their *doctrine* on the subject of tradition.

The doctrine on this point advocated in the works under consideration may be summed up, as we have already observed, in the five propositions which we have given in the preceding chapter; (pp. 40, 41;) and these propositions represent precisely the doctrine of the Church of Rome in this matter, as I shall now proceed to show with respect to each of them *seriatim*.

I. That consentient patristical tradition, or "catholic consent," is an unwritten word of God, a divine informant in religion, and consequently entitled, as to its *substance*, to equal respect with the Holy Scriptures.

"We assert," says Bellarmine, "that the whole necessary doctrine either concerning *faith* or *manners* is not contained *explicitly* (*expresse*) in the Scriptures; and that *consequently* beyond the written word of God is required also the unwritten word of God, that is, the divine and apostolical traditions. . . . They [i. e. the Protestants] think that if there were any apostolical traditions they do not now exist, that is, that there cannot be any certain proof had of any apostolical tradition. . . . We, on the contrary, assert that there are not wanting certain ways and methods by which apostolical traditions may be manifested. . . . If the authority of an apostle when giving an oral precept is not less than when giving a written one, there certainly is no temerity in considering any thing unwritten equivalent to the written word." [Which last observation is of course very true and admitted by all, and therefore to no purpose but to lead the reader to misapprehend the views of the Protestants; but I notice it to show how precisely the Tractators have echoed the statements of the Romanists on this subject.] (De Verb. lib. iv. c. 3.)

The Council of Trent says,—“The most holy synod . . . seeing that the evangelical doctrine and polity are contained in the written books and those unwritten traditions which were received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or, emanating from the apostles themselves, at the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and delivered down from hand to hand, have descended to us, following the example of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with a like feeling of piety and reverence all the books as well of the Old as of the New Testament, since one God is the author of both, as also traditions themselves, as well those relating to *faith* as those relating to *manners*, as either uttered by Christ or dictated by the Holy Spirit, and preserved in the Catholic church by an uninterrupted succession,” (Conc. Trid. Sess. 4.)

And the rules given by Bellarmine for ascertaining such traditions are delivered by him thus;—“The first rule is, When the whole church embraces any thing as an article of faith which is not found in the divine Scriptures, we must say, that that is derived from the tradition of the apostles The second rule is, When the whole church observes any thing which none but God could ordain, which nevertheless is nowhere found written, it must be admitted that it was delivered (*traditum*) by Christ himself and his apostles The third rule is, That which has been observed in the whole church, and in all past times, is justly considered to have been instituted by the apostles, although it is of such a nature that it might have been ordained by the church. . . . The fourth rule is, When all the doctors of the church declare with one consent that any thing descends from apostolical tradition, either when assembled in a general council,

or writing individually in their works, that is to be considered to be an apostolical tradition The fifth rule is, That is to be believed beyond doubt to descend from apostolical tradition which is considered to be such in those churches where there is an entire and uninterrupted succession from the apostles.”¹

It is hardly necessary to say that he adds the limitation,—“We admit no tradition that is contrary to Scripture;”² “we never defend traditions that are at variance with the Scripture.”³

The first four of these rules for ascertaining what is supposed to remain to us of oral apostolical tradition are in effect the same as those of Mr. Newman and Mr. Keble. That the fourth accords with the views of our opponents will not be questioned. And so does the first practically. For when Bellarmine speaks of the universal church holding this or that, he means not merely the present church, but the church as including the Fathers; and both he and I believe, I might say, all the best writers of the Romish communion hold that the testimony of the Fathers in their *writings* is necessary for the establishment of any thing as having proceeded from the oral teaching of the apostles. The examples given by Bellarmine on this rule show this, being the perpetual virginity of the mother of our Lord, and the number of the canonical books, for a proof of both which they would send us to the Fathers. And he says, “That is called unwritten doctrine, *not such as is nowhere written*, but that which is not written by its first author. As, for instance, the baptism of infants. That infants are to be baptized is called an unwritten apostolical tradition, because it is not found written in any apostolical book, although it is written in the books of almost all the antient Fathers.”⁴ And again, “Those rites only we receive as apostolical which we can prove to be apostolical by firm testimonies of the antients.”⁵ And one of his notes of the true church is “agreement in doctrine with the primitive church.”

And Cardinal Perron distinctly lays down the catholic consent of the primitive church as the test of truth in the way that our opponents have. “That then,” he says, “shall remain truly universal and catholic that the most eminent Fathers of the times of the four first Councils have taught in several regions of the earth; and against which none (except some persons noted for dissension in the church) hath resisted, or that the Fathers of those ages do testify to have been believed and practised by the whole church in their times. And that shall remain truly antient and apostolic that the Fathers of those ages do testify to have been observed by

¹ De V. Dei. lib. iv. c. 9.

² Nec ullam traditionem admittimus contra Scripturam. Ib. c. 3.

³ Nec enim traditiones cum Scriptura pugnantes unquam defendimus. Ib. c. 11.

⁴ De V. Dei. lib. iv. c. 2.

⁵ De V. Dei. lib. iv. c. 3.

the whole church, not as a thing sprung up in their time, but as a thing derived down to them either from the immemorial succession of former ages or from the express tradition of the apostles." And he takes the period of the four councils (he tells us) because, if the period taken be much shorter, "there remain so few *writings* of that date" that "the face of the antient doctrine and practice cannot evidently appear to be therein represented." (Letter to Casaubon, inserted at the beginning of his "Replique," &c.) So that the tradition of which these authors speak must derive its proofs from the writings of the early Fathers, and be, in fact, as that of our opponents is, patristical tradition. I do not deny, but am well aware, that some writers among the Romanists have not apparently owned the necessity of finding the whole doctrine of the church in the Fathers, but have seemed to suppose that some part of the oral teaching of the apostles might yet be *unwritten*, and in the possession of the church, so that the church might at any time declare a doctrine not opposed to Scripture or what is called the unanimous consent of antiquity, to have come down by successive oral delivery from the apostles; and that upon her testimony, she being the keeper of the oral teaching of the apostles, we are bound to believe such doctrine to be apostolical. But this is not the doctrine of such men as those we have quoted. They clearly held, at any rate in theory, with our opponents, that the oral teaching of the apostles was to be sought for in the *written patristical* report of it. And even in the case of the others, I suspect it would be generally found, that any apparent difference in their statements arose only from our affixing a different sense to the phrase *oral tradition* to what they did, and supposing it to mean *a tradition that has never been put in writing*, instead of *a tradition not put in writing by its author*.

Hence it was said by Mr. Eyre, in his "Reply to the Rev. R. Churton,"—"Had you examined the expositions of their faith as stated in councils, by universities, divines, &c. you would have learnt that the uninterrupted and common consent of all ages was requisite to constitute tradition a rule of faith." . . . "You do not seem to comprehend what is meant by the unwritten word of God, or *oral* tradition. You suppose, if it be upon *record* (to use your own words) it ceases to be *oral* tradition or the unwritten word of God. No such thing. It is not called the *unwritten* word of God because it is nowhere committed to writing, as I told you before, but because it is not written in the inspired books of Scripture. And though we should admit oral tradition in the sense you take it, yet every discriminating article, either as to faith or morality, we can readily prove from tradition in the sense I have explained it." (pp. 121, 2.)

And so it was said by one of the Roman Catholic speakers in the "Downside discussion,"—"Secure in these assurances [i. e. Matt. xxviii. 20; &c.] the church *collates the writings of the Fathers*, and judging by their morally unanimous testimony, it discerns true traditions from false."¹ And the Council of Trent enjoins² that no one shall interpret Scripture contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers (*contra unanimem consensum Patrum*.) And Pius IV. orders all the clergy and regulars of every order to take an oath that they will never understand nor interpret Scripture but according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.³

The fifth rule, understood with the limitation which of course was intended, viz. that the point established by it be not contradicted by other similarly obtained testimony, (for otherwise this rule would be contradictory to the preceding,) is also in perfect accordance apparently with the views advocated in the works under consideration. I am not speaking of the *use* made of this rule by the Church of Rome, who, boasting that she is the only church remaining that has preserved the apostolical succession sanctifies by this rule all her impositions, shutting out by her exclusive claims the possibility of contradiction; but I speak of the rule in itself, and according to its fair application. And if I rightly understand the doctrine of "episcopal grace" as delivered in these works, it completely establishes the truth of this rule. "*Apostolical or episcopal grace*," says Mr. Keble, "*is by God's ordinance the guardian of sound doctrine*; the spirit abiding in Timothy is to watch incessantly the deposit or trust of divine truth left in his charge; and where the one, *the succession*, fails, there, as this verse would lead us to expect, and as all church history, proves, the other, the truth of doctrine, is immediately in imminent jeopardy."

(p. 44.) But, however this may be, the theory of the two on the subject of tradition is evidently precisely the same; and the power which the Church of Rome in every age assumes of declaring what is and what is not an apostolical tradition, is a power limited in theory by these rules. It is true that in the application of these rules the Church of Rome may be "neglectful of antiquity" for the sake of maintaining some favorite doctrine or rite, as Mr. Newman justly charges upon her, but so may others also, and some think that the writers of the Tracts for the Times may in some points be included in the number; nay, the Church of

¹ Downside discussion, p. 70.

² Sess. 4

³ Nec eam [i. e. Scripturam] unquam nisi juxta unanimem consensum Patrum accipiam et interpretabor. Bull. Pii IV. sup. form. Juram. prefix. ad Catech. Concil. Trid.

Rome may (as Bellarmine does for her in the passage we have been quoting) claim to be the only church remaining that possesses the apostolical succession. But these matters are quite distinct from her doctrine of tradition. They may lead her into error in her application of that doctrine, but they are quite distinct from and independent of it. The doctrine is precisely the same as that advocated by the Tractators.

Mr. Newman has devoted his second lecture to the subject of "Romanism as neglectful of antiquity." The charge is a just one, but I cannot think that Mr. Newman has there proved it; for all which his observations go to prove is, that some individual members of the Church of Rome have without difficulty conceived themselves to have found in the Fathers precisely what their prejudices led them to wish for.

Now did it never strike him that if his own great argument is just, viz. that the meaning of Scripture must be uncertain and obscure, because it is quoted in support of opposite doctrines, this is one of the best proofs he could have given of the uncertainty and obscurity of patristical tradition, that the Fathers can so readily be adduced in favour of contrary views?

In making these remarks, I would by no means be understood to deny that practically the system of the Romish church is much worse than a faithful adherence to such a rule of judgment would produce. On the contrary, we are at issue with Rome, not merely as to her theory of tradition, but *also* as to her allegation that primitive antiquity is on her side. We deny altogether that patristical testimony taken as a whole is in her favour, and claim it in behalf of the doctrines of our own church, and therefore are opposed to Rome, as it respects the *fact* what doctrines and practices have the support of antiquity. And to this *part* of our controversy with her our opponents would limit our *whole* controversy with her, and still further reduce even this part of it, by admitting doctrines repudiated both by the authoritative documents and the best divines of our church, and claiming for them with the Romanists the support of antiquity. We may say of them, therefore, what both we and they agree to say of the Romanists, that their doctrines are worse than a faithful adherence to *their own* rule would produce; ever remembering that besides this controversy as to the matter of fact, we have another and a more important with them, as to what is the sole divine rule of faith and practice.

II. That such tradition is consequently a part of the divinely-revealed rule of faith and practice.

In addition to the extracts given under the last head, I subjoin the following,—

"I assert," says Bellarmine, "that Scripture, although not
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composed principally with the view of its being a rule of faith, is nevertheless a rule of faith, not the entire rule but a partial rule. For the entire rule of faith is the word of God, or God's revelation made to the church, which is distributed into two partial rules, Scripture and tradition."¹

And so the Tridentine Catechism says,—“The whole of the doctrine to be delivered to the faithful is contained in the word of God, which is distributed into Scripture and traditions.”²

III. That it is a necessary part of the divine rule of faith and practice, on account of the defectiveness of Scripture, for that (1) though it does not reveal to us any fundamental articles of faith or practice not *noticed* in Scripture, Holy Scripture containing, that is, *giving hints or notices of*, all the fundamental articles of faith and practice, it is yet a necessary part of the divine rule of faith and practice as the interpreter of Scripture, and as giving the full development of many articles, some of which are fundamental, which are but imperfectly developed in Scripture: and, (2) it is an important part of that rule as conveying to us various important doctrines and rules not contained in Scripture.

The former of these two propositions includes *two* points; the *first*, that Holy Scripture contains all the fundamental articles of faith and practice; the *second*, that nevertheless it is to be considered as even in these only a part of the rule of faith and of the *divine* rule of practice, the other part being tradition as its interpreter, and as giving a sufficient development of those articles.

On the first of these points, Mr. Newman and Mr. Keble both assert that it is not held by the Church of Rome. With how little reason the following extracts will show.

“There are two things,” says Bellarmine, “to be particularly observed The first is, that there are some things in the Christian doctrine *as well of faith as of morals*, that are in themselves (simpliciter) necessary to all for salvation, such as is a knowledge of the Articles of the Apostles' Creed, likewise a knowledge of the ten commandments and certain sacraments. The rest are not so necessary, that without an explicit knowledge and belief and profession of them a man cannot be saved, if only he have a ready mind to receive and believe them when they shall have been legitimately propounded to him by the Church. . . . Observe, secondly, that those things which are in themselves (simpliciter) necessary, the apostles were in the habit of preaching to all; but of other things they did not deliver

¹ De V. D. iv. c. 12.

² Omnis doctrinæ ratio, quæ fidelibus tradenda sit, verbo Dei continetur, quod in Scripturam traditionesque distributum est. Cat. Trid. Præf. §. xix.

all to all men, but some of them to all, those, namely, which were of use to all, some to the prelates, bishops, and presbyters only¹ These things being observed, I assert, that *all those things were written by the apostles which are necessary to all*, and which they themselves had openly preached to all without distinction; but that of other things not all were written."² And further on he says, (going quite as far as, if not beyond, even our opponents, themselves in his admissions on this point,)—"I assert, that of all those articles which relate to the nature of God, there exist proofs (testimonia) in the Scriptures, and that we may be *fully and clearly* instructed concerning those articles from the Scriptures if we take them in their right sense."³

And, like our opponents, he repudiates with indignation the charge made against the Romanists by the Protestants, of undervaluing Scripture. "It is usual," he says "with them, [i. e. the Protestants] to treat the matter as if they defended the Scriptures only, and we defended traditions only, nor cared whether traditions were agreeable to Scripture or contrary to Scripture. But it is not so: *for we put a higher value on Scripture (Scripturam pluris facimus) than they do*; nor admit any tradition against Scripture."⁴

From the two former of these passages, then, it is evident that the more learned Romanists hold that all those doctrines the belief of which is essentially necessary to salvation, including particularly the articles in the Apostles' Creed, are contained in the Scriptures. There is, indeed, an intimation that there must also be a willing mind to embrace those points which may be propounded for belief by the church, but then it must be recollected that the Church of Rome does not profess to introduce new doctrines, but only to inculcate those which are derived either from Scripture or that church-tradition which (like the Tractators) it receives as apostolical. That is, the concession here made that the Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation is accompanied by the requirement that that is also to be believed which the church propounds as an apostolical doctrine derived from tradition; a demand which seems to me to be equally made by the Tractators.

And when it is intimated that what is propounded by the

¹ This notion of there being a reserve observed by the apostles in the communication of religious knowledge, and of some matters having been committed by them more especially to the custody of the clergy, has also been embraced by our opponents, and an exhortation given by them to the present church to practise a similar reserve! See Tract 80, "On reserve in communicating religious knowledge."

² De V. D. iv. c. 11.

³ Ib.

⁴ Ib. c. 3.

church is a necessary article of faith, it is not meant that the matter of it is in itself a necessary article of faith, but that a direct rejection of what the church delivers from "tradition" as divine revelation is a mortal sin. As it is said by a "learned and esteemed writer" (as he is called by Chalmers) of the Romish communion, viz. Abraham Woodhead,¹ "Fundamental, indeed, they [the Romanists] call sometimes all points defined by the church's councils, and hold them necessary to be believed for attaining salvation; but not necessary in such a sense as *ratione medii* necessary; or absolutely *extra quas (creditas) non est salus*, but only necessary to be believed upon supposition of a sufficient proposal of them made to any person that they have been so defined . . . because if after such proposal and sufficient notice given him of their being defined he believe them not, he now stands guilty, in this his disobedience to his supreme spiritual guides, of a mortal sin (unrepented of) destructive of his salvation." "The church's anathema in many of her canons seizeth on a person not so much for the matter of his error, though this not denied to some degree hurtful to him, and diminishing his perfection in the faith, as for the pertinacy of his erring, and the contumacy and perverseness of his will, disobeying the church and his spiritual superiors, sufficiently manifesting the contrary truth to be her doctrine and a portion of the Christian faith." And so strongly is this held by them that their learned Bishop Fisher, who Mr. Newman tells us² is "as fair a specimen of the Roman controversialist as could be taken," says,—"The doctrine of purgatory being necessary to be believed of all men, it is not credible but that it may be proved by Scripture."³

Hence the Romanists do not deny the sufficiency of the doctrines contained in the Holy Scriptures for salvation, but holding that they possess an unwritten word of God in that which claims to be apostolical tradition, and that what they propound as a church from that source ought to be received as such by the faithful, they hold unbelief in such propositions to be a mortal sin, as being a deliberate rejection of a divine testimony, and so far that a belief in them is necessary to salvation. What the Romanists deny with respect to the sufficiency of the Scriptures in

¹ "Among the polemic writers of the seventeenth century, few are more generally read or respected than the celebrated Abraham Woodhead."—Charles Butler.

² Account of doctrine of Roman Catholics concerning the Ecclesiastical Guide in Controversies of Religion. By R. H. Second Edition, 1673, 4to. (pp. 245, 8.)

³ Lect. p. 90.

⁴ Cum doctrina purgatorii sit omnibus scitu necessaria, non est credibile, illam non posse probari ex Scripturis. Adv. Luth. Art. 18. See Bp. Morton's Prot. Appeal, I. 2. §. 13. p. 15.

the *fundamental* points, is only that which our opponents deny concerning it in the second part of the position under consideration, viz. that in these points Scripture is to be considered the whole of the rule, being, as they think, only a part of it, the other part being tradition as its interpreter.

"We assert," says Bellarmine as above quoted, "that there is not contained in the Scripture, *in express terms*, (*expresse*) the whole necessary doctrine either concerning faith or concerning manners; and *therefore* that beyond the written word of God is required also the unwritten word of God, that is, the divine and apostolical traditions."¹ "Scripture is very often ambiguous and obscure, so that unless it be interpreted by some one who cannot err, it cannot be understood; *therefore it is not sufficient ALONE*. . . . It is to be observed that there are two things in Scripture, the written words and the meaning contained in them . . . Of these two the first is possessed by all . . . the second is not possessed by all, nor can we in many places be certain of the second, but by the addition of tradition."²

Comparing, then, these negative with the former affirmative propositions, we find that what Bellarmine denies with respect to the Scriptures, as to the fundamental articles of faith and practice, is only that they contain them so expressly or explicitly³ as to render unnecessary what is called the unwritten word. That is, there is asserted to be an obscurity in Scripture which needs the aid of the unwritten word to clear it up. And this is all which the Romanists deny to the sufficiency of Scripture in the *necessary* points, as is more fully stated in the work to which I have just alluded. "As for the *sufficiency* or *intireness* of the Scriptures for the containing all those points of faith that are simply necessary of all persons to be believed for attaining salvation, Roman Catholics deny it not; but only deny such a *clearness* of Scripture in some of those as Christians cannot mistake or pervert. . . . Though Catholics maintain several credends that are not expressed in Scriptures necessary to be believed and observed by Christians *after the church's proposal of them as tradition apostolical*, amongst which is *the canon of Scripture*; yet they willingly concede that all such points of faith as are simply necessary for attaining salvation, and as ought explicitly by all men to be known in order thereto, either *ratione*

¹ De V. D. iv. c. 3.

² Ib. c. 4.

³ The inference as to the necessity of tradition, shows that the word *expresse* must be taken to include both a *formal* and *virtual expression* of the doctrines in question. Words fairer to the Protestant view, therefore, might have been used, because the Protestant doctrine is that all such points are contained in Scripture *either* expressly or virtually, in such a way as to be deducible thence by *direct* and *necessary* inference.

medii or *præcepti*, as the doctrines collected in the three Creeds, *the common precepts of manners and of the more necessary sacraments, &c.*, are contained in the Scriptures; contained therein, either in the conclusion itself or in the principles from whence it is necessarily deduced. [He here refers for proof to passages in Bellarmine, Stapleton, F. Fisher, Thomas Aquinas, and Fr. a S. Clara.] Therefore the church from time to time defining any thing concerning such points, defines it out of the revelations made in Scripture. And the chief tradition, the necessity and benefit of which is pretended by the church, is not the delivering of any additional doctrines descended from the apostles' times *extra Scripturas*, i. e. such doctrines as have not their *foundation at least* in Scripture; but is the preserving and delivering of the *primitive* sense and *church-explication* of that which is written in the Scriptures, but many times not there written so clearly; which traditive sense of the church you may find made use of against Arianism in the first Council of Nice. It is not the deficiency of Scripture as to all the main, and prime, and universally necessary-to-be-known articles of faith, *as if there were any necessity that these be supplied and completed with other not written traditional doctrines of faith*, that Catholics do question; but such a non-clearness of Scriptures for several of these points as that they may be misunderstood, (which non-clearness of them infers a necessity of making use of the church's tradition for a true exposition and sense,) is the thing that they assert. I say then; *not* this, Whether the main, or if you will, *the entire* body of the Christian faith, as to all points necessary by all to be explicitly believed, be contained there, [i. e. in the Scriptures]; *but this*; Whether so clearly that the unlearned using a right diligence cannot therein mistake, or do not need therein *another guide*, is the thing here contested." (pp. 136—9.

The Romanists therefore affirm, as we do, that Holy Scripture contains all things which are in themselves necessary to salvation, but add, like the Tractators, that it contains them obscurely, and so as to render it necessary for us to have some other authoritative guide to point them out there; and they hold that we have such a guide in "tradition," which is, they say, an unwritten word of God, and the authoritative interpreter of the written word, and that from it we also derive some supplementary articles of faith and practice; to which they add, that when these latter articles are legitimately propounded to the faithful by the church, they are binding upon the consciences of men, which, if their views of "tradition" and "the church" are correct, is undeniable.

Now whether the Tractators agree with the Romanists on this last point is a matter not worth considering here, because it is not relevant to our present subject; but it is evident, at least, that in all other respects these views are precisely the same with those advocated in the works under consideration.

Mr. Keble, therefore, is altogether mistaken in imputing to the Romanists that they hold "tradition of the substance of doctrine independent of Scripture, and purporting to be of things necessary to salvation." (p. 71.) And Mr. Newman, in saying, "*We differ from the Romanists in this, not in denying that tradition is valuable, but in maintaining that by itself and without Scripture warrant it does not convey to us any article necessary to salvation.*" (p. 370.)

When the Romanists use the expression that Holy Scripture does not contain all the articles of the Christian faith necessary to be believed, they are speaking not with reference to any supposed insufficiency in Scripture as to containing all the doctrines essentially necessary to salvation, but to the necessity of belief in that which they, as the church, pronounce to be an apostolical tradition, on pain of committing a mortal sin. If in this view of the extent of church-authority there is any difference between our opponents and the Romanists, yet nevertheless as to the place and value to be assigned to Scripture and tradition respectively, the views of the two are evidently identical; and how near they approximate to each other on this very point of church-authority in enforcing tradition, we may judge by the extracts already given from Mr. Newman in the former chapter.¹

And it is well worth the consideration of our opponents, and those who are disposed to agree with them, how far their charges against the Church of Rome for affirming things to be apostolical traditions which are not so, go to prove the uncertainty attendant upon all practically attainable declarations of "the church" in the present day, as to what are apostolical traditions, and still more upon such declarations when made by individuals.

The second of the two propositions we are now considering, viz:—

That patristical tradition is an important part of the divine rule as conveying to us various important doctrines and rules not contained in Scripture,—

Is thus advocated by Bellarmine. He remarks that tradition is necessary because there are many points which we ought not to be ignorant of, and which yet are not contained in Scripture, instancing, among the other examples which he gives, the doctrines of the perpetual virginity of the Virgin Mary, (the example

¹ See pp. 43, et seq. above.

mentioned by Mr. Newman,) purgatory, and the practice of infant baptism.¹

Hence he says, "I affirm that Scripture although it was not written principally with a view of its being a rule of faith, is nevertheless a rule of faith—not the entire but a partial rule. For the entire rule of faith is the word of God, or God's revelation made to the church, which is divided into two partial rules, Scripture and tradition. And truly Scripture, inasmuch as it is a rule, has in consequence this property, that whatever it contains is necessarily true and to be believed, and whatever is contrary to it is necessarily false and to be rejected: but inasmuch as it is not the entire but a partial rule, the consequence is, that it is not a rule for all things, and moreover, that there may be something relating to the faith which is not contained in it. And in this way ought the words of St. Augustine to be understood. For he nowhere says, that Scripture is the only rule, but says, that Scripture is the rule by which the writings of the antient Fathers ought to be examined, that we may receive those things which are agreeable to Scripture, and reject those things which are opposed to Scripture."²

Now, I must say, that the estimate we should form from the remarks of Bellarmine in this place of the value of tradition as supplementary to Scripture, would fall below that derived from the observations of Mr. Keble on the same point, quoted pp. 37—38 above.

The fourth position, viz:—

IV. That patristical tradition is a necessary part of the divine rule of faith and practice, because of the *obscurity* of Scripture even in some of the fundamental articles, which makes Scripture insufficient to *teach* us even the fundamentals of faith and practice,—

Corresponds with that of Bellarmine when speaking of the seventh use of tradition.

"Seventhly," he says, "it is necessary not only to be able to read Scripture but also to understand it. But very often Scripture is ambiguous and obscure, so that unless it be interpreted by one who cannot err, it cannot be understood: therefore it is not sufficient alone. Examples are numerous. For the equality of the divine Persons, the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son as from one original, original sin, the descent of Christ into hell, and many similar things are deduced indeed from the Holy Scriptures, but not so easily but that if we could contend for them on the ground of Scripture testimonies only, controversies with froward opponents would never be brought to

¹ De Verb. Dei. lib. iv. c. 4.

² Ib. c. 13.

an end. For it is to be observed, that there are two things in Scripture, the written words and the sense contained in them. The words are as it were the scabbard, the sense is the sword itself of the Spirit. Of these two the first is possessed by all, for whoever knows his letters can read the Scriptures; but the second is not possessed by all, nor can we in many places be certain of the second, unless tradition come to our aid."¹

With this agrees also the quotation which we have given above from Woodhead. (See pp. 81, 2.)

In correspondence with the fifth position, viz.—

V. That it is only by the testimony of patristical tradition that we are assured of the inspiration of Scripture, what books are canonical, and the genuineness of what we receive as such,—

Bellarmino, in describing the fourth, fifth, and sixth uses for which tradition is necessary, maintains as follows;—"Fourthly, it is necessary to know, that there exist certain truly divine books, a truth which certainly cannot be obtained in any way from the Scriptures. For although Scripture may say, that the books of the Prophets and Apostles are divine, yet I cannot believe this for certain, unless I should previously have been brought to believe that the Scripture, which says this, is divine. For in the Alcoran of Mahomet we every where read that the Alcoran itself was sent by God from heaven, and yet we do not believe it. Therefore, this so necessary article, namely, that there is some divine Scripture, cannot be sufficiently proved from Scripture alone. Therefore, since faith is founded upon the word of God, (*nitatur verbo Dei*.) unless we have an unwritten word of God, we can have no faith. . . . Fifthly, it is not sufficient to know that there is a divine Scripture, but it behoves us to know *which it is*; a thing which cannot in any way be had from the Scriptures. . . . Sixthly, it behoves us also not only to know which are the sacred books, but also in particular that those we have are those books . . . which certainly cannot be known from the Scriptures. . . . If it be so, then Scripture is not sufficient alone. . . . For if it be left destitute of this unwritten tradition and the testimony of the church, it will be of little service. *Moreover, if this tradition has been able to come down to us, why cannot others also have come down in the same way?*"²

And hence one of the most common arguments with the Romanists, as with our opponents, is, that having received Scripture upon this testimony, we ought not to object to receive the doctrines that may come down to us upon this testimony.³ I should

¹ Ib. c. 4.

² Ib.

³ See the "Guide in Controversies," by R. H. p. 366; Eyre's Reply to Churton, pp. 117—119; &c.

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add, however, that there are some *few*, even among the Romanists, who take a sounder view on this point, and believe the authority of the Scripture, independently of the judgment of the church; as, for instance, the learned Huetius, in his "Evangelical Demonstration."¹

Whether, then, we regard the nature and character of patristical tradition, the place and value to be assigned to the Scriptures, or the purposes for which that tradition is supposed to be necessary, the views advocated on all these points in the works under consideration, are precisely identical with those of the Church of Rome. In some minor and unimportant points connected with this subject, there may be a little difference of opinion, as there is, in fact, among the Romanists themselves. For instance, some of the reasons given by Bellarmine (ch. 4) in proof of the necessity of tradition, may not be adopted by the authors under consideration. But the doctrine of tradition, as it may be called, is evidently involved and comprised in the points we have just been considering, and in these there is clearly a perfect agreement between them and the Romanists.

The doctrine, as above stated, is charged upon the Romanists, and refuted, in a Treatise which I would strongly recommend to the notice of the reader, namely, Placette's "Incurable Scepticism of the Church of Rome," translated and published by Archbishop Tenison, and inserted by Bishop Gibson in his Preservative against Popery, where the author shows the insufficiency of all the various grounds on which the Church of Rome professes to rest her faith.²

The general agreement between our opponents and the Romanists may be still further confirmed by a comparison of their views with a dissertation on Tradition, given in a Roman Catholic work, published a few years ago, on the Fathers;³ and the reader may observe not only a remarkable similarity in the views advanced as to the point now in question, but also some rather *curious coincidences* in the *form of expression*. If Mr. Newman had seen this treatise, it might have been well for him to have directed our attention to it, as containing, though mixed with some things respecting the Pope, in which, perhaps, he could not agree, a much more lucid statement of the matter than he has given us. In the treatise we find it placed before us in a clear and precise manner, as if the author was not afraid to let his readers fully see its length and its breadth; so that any one

¹ See Placette's Incurable Scepticism of the Church of Rome, c. 2.

² See particularly cc. 2, 3, and 20—27.

³ *Luxemb. Histor. Theol.—Crit. de vita, &c. Patrum. Aug. Vind. 1783, &c. 13 v. 8vo.* This work is a compilation from various works on the Fathers. The dissertation above alluded to is principally taken from Massuet.

who reads it sees at once what he is called upon to embrace ; whereas, in Mr. Newman's work it is so mixed up with such names as Stillingfleet, Butler, and others, and such expressions of regard for the doctrine of the Church of England, and abhorrence of *certain practices* of the Romanists ; in a word, the poison is so spread out in *infinitesimal* portions through the work, and gilded with Protestant names, that the greater part of his readers would have but a very indistinct notion of what they had been imbibing, and still less of the consequences to which it must lead them. I will not say, however, that Mr. Newman has not herein judged *skilfully* of the means best likely to attain the end he has in view, of bringing the English Church to a reception of his doctrine ; and we find from Mr. Froude's "Remains," published by Mr. Newman, that the value of prudence in the mode of bringing forward their doctrines, is fully estimated by at least some of our opponents.

I shall now give a few extracts from this dissertation, which is written more particularly on Irenæus.

"That the sacred Scriptures are the words of God, and a certain and immutable rule of truth, to which nothing must be added, and from which nothing must be taken away, Irenæus *most rightly teaches*. Nevertheless, that all the words of God are not *expressly* contained in them, but that the apostles, as the ambassadors and heralds of Christ, taught other things which they never consigned to writing, he not less clearly declares." And then, after having quoted some passages from Irenæus, (lib. 3, cc. 3, 45,) he adds,—“From which these things evidently follow ; first, that the very worst of all the heretics *acknowledged and confessed* that the Scriptures were ambiguously expressed ; that is, were sometimes obscure, and admitted of several senses ; secondly, that the meaning of the obscure passages was to be sought from tradition, not that which was written, but that which was delivered orally. This Irenæus blames not,¹ nay, in what follows, approves of, as we shall presently see. Thirdly, that tradition is *fuller* than the Scriptures, and distinct from them, as being their *interpreter* But the medium, and as it were canal, through which the apostolical tradition has come down to us uninjured, is the succession of bishops lawfully ordained in the catholic church.”

And in a subsequent note (p. 348) he tells us, “If these traditions were uncertain, the genuineness of the books of Scripture would itself be uncertain. For *whatever arguments the Protestants adduce for these are also of force to prove the certainty*

¹ How far this is true we shall see hereafter, when we come to inquire into the sentiments of Irenæus on this matter. (See c. 10.)

and stability of tradition," (Nam argumenta quæcunque quæ Protestantæ pro his adferunt etiam pugnant pro traditionis certitudine et firmitate.) Just as Mr. Newman tells us that, "*whatever explanations the Protestant makes in behalf of the preservation of the written word, will be found applicable in the theory to the unwritten.*" (p. 46.)

And in the latter part of the Treatise, we have the following marks given us of apostolical tradition. First, the negative marks, that is, those that show a thing not to be an apostolical tradition, being, "(1.) Every tradition that is clearly opposed to Holy Scripture, is not divine. (2.) A tradition contrary to a tradition known to be divine, is not divine. (3.) Every tradition that is contrary to the common consent of the Fathers and the definition of the church, is not divine. (4.) A tradition, the origin of which was clearly subsequent to the times of the apostles, is not divine. (5.) A tradition, respecting which churches of like dignity are divided, is not indubitably divine." Secondly, the positive marks of divine tradition, being, "(1) That which was always everywhere and by all believed as revealed, is most certainly a divine revelation. Although it cannot be sufficiently clearly, or by any convincing argument, derived from Holy Scripture, it must be considered as certainly flowing from divine tradition. In the first case, where the doctrine is contained in Scripture, but not sufficiently clearly or of necessity, it will be a declarative tradition. In the second case, where it is either evidently not contained in Scripture, or at least cannot be derived from it by any convincing argument, it will be an oral tradition.

"(2.) That any thing should be considered as having been believed always, every where, and by all, it is not necessary that all individual churches should mathematically or physically agree; but a moral consent of the churches is sufficient, and those the chief ones; whence, if these agree together in stating any doctrine which cannot be derived from Scripture, it is most certainly to be held that it emanates from divine tradition.

"(3.) The uniform agreement and uniform practice of the church of the fourth and fifth century, except this practice is known to have originated in the decree of the church or a council, is a certain sign that that which was then believed was always and every where believed as a divine revelation *before* the fourth and fifth century." Precisely according to the doctrine of our opponents, in Tract 85, sect. 8, pp. 102, &c.

"(4.) When the universal church observes any thing as pertaining to faith, religion, or manners, the institution of which exceeds human power, and which is not found in the Holy Scriptures, it is to be believed as certain that that was derived from divine tradition.

"(5.) The doctrine which the universal church has defended in any age, although it be not clear that it prevailed in particular churches, if it has been always preserved in the principal or apostolical churches, proceeded from divine tradition.

"(6.) Whatever the church hath either defined in a general council, as a doctrine of faith or manners, or even universally professed without any decision of a general council, that, if it either clearly cannot, or at least cannot sufficiently, be proved from Scripture, is of divine tradition.

"(7.) The uniform consent of the Fathers of the first five centuries bearing witness universally of any doctrine not contained in Scripture, affords a certain foundation for considering that that doctrine is of divine tradition, although it is altogether speculative." And in a note on this mark he says,—“It is not required for that consent that they should all of them have spoken just alike, and written so that none disagreed with the rest [i. e. it is not necessary to that consent that they should all have consented]; for that consent is not to be taken *mathematically*, but *morally*. But *how many Fathers precisely may be sufficient* and be required, cannot be generally defined, as always happens in those things which are to be judged of *morally*, and which are *left to the judgment of persons of good sense*.” (Neque ad eam consensionem requiritur ut omnes illi prorsus idem dixerint scripserintque nemine discordante: ejusmodi enim consensus non mathematice sed moraliter accipiendus est. Cæterum quinam præcise Patrum numerus sufficiat et requiratur, generaliter definiri nequit, ut semper contingit in iis quæ moraliter æstimanda sunt et prudentum judicio relinquuntur.) Which remarks are surely *remarkably similar* to the following observations of Mr. Newman:—“The rule of Vincent,” says Mr. Newman, “is not of a *mathematical* or demonstrative character, but *moral*, and requires *practical judgment and good sense* to apply it. For instance, what is meant by being ‘taught always’? . . . And does the ‘consent of Fathers’ require us to produce *the direct testimony of every one of them*? *How many Fathers*, how many places, how many instances, constitute a fulfilment of the test proposed? . . . What degree of application is enough, must be decided by the *same principles which guide us in the conduct of life*,” &c. (pp. 68, 9.)

"(8.) If the universal church observes any thing which is found to have been observed in it in all past times, though the institution of it may not be beyond human authority, if its origin cannot be ascertained, it is deservedly thought to have been instituted by the apostles; but if ascending upwards, and inquiring into its origin, we find it, it is only a human ecclesiastical tradition.”

And to these marks are appended the following “corollaries.”

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"(1.) To those divine traditions whose existence is proved by the foregoing marks, the assent of a divine faith is due equally as to Scripture.

"(2.) The divine traditions of which we are *certain*, are a rule of faith. [To this all will subscribe.]

"(3.) Tradition certainly and continuously diffused throughout the universal church, is the fittest mean for applying to us divine revelation.

"(4.) Therefore Scripture is not perfect in the Protestant sense. For it does not suffice alone to *prove convincingly* all the doctrines of faith and precepts of manners of the church, either those that are necessary or those that are useful."

"Therefore," adds the writer, "*the complete rule of faith is Scripture joined with divine tradition, which if Protestants would admit, all the other controversies between us and them would soon cease.*"¹

There is only one point in which I conceive our opponents can object to this statement as differing from theirs, and that is, that it does not *distinctly state* that all the fundamental doctrines are contained in the written word; but this was a point not in question, and nothing here stated opposes that view, and I have already shown that our opponents are totally mistaken in supposing that the Romanists do not hold this, that is, *in the sense in which they themselves hold it*, namely, that these doctrines are *so contained* in the Scriptures, that tradition is necessary to *show* that they are there. But certainly the Romanists holding this view do not pretend to refer us to Scripture only for *proofs* of a doctrine which they think that we could not find in Scripture but by the aid of tradition, and herein are much more consistent than the Tractators.

If more evidence were wanted of the views of the Romanists on this point, it would be easy to find it. One of our opponents' own witnesses, Dean Field, will tell them, "For matters of faith we may conclude, according to the judgment of the best and most learned of our adversaries themselves, that there is nothing to be believed which is not either expressly contained in Scripture, or at least by necessary consequence from thence and other things evident in the light of nature or in the matter of fact to be concluded." (Of the Church, bk. 4. c. 20, p. 377.) And for modern evidence, they will find it in the Downside discussion, where one of the Roman Catholic speakers says, "The catholic doctrine is, that *all absolutely essential revelations are contained in the written word*, but it cannot be proved that all the doctrines, all and every one of those truths which Christ

¹ See Lumper, vol. iii. pp. 318—62.

came from heaven to reveal, and which he willed should be handed down to future ages, that all these are contained in the written word." (p. 172.) And again,—"*Protestants maintain that the Bible alone is the rule of faith: we maintain that all absolutely essential doctrines are expressed in the Scriptures; either in the conclusions themselves, or in the principles whence they are deduced.*" And then, having quoted several authorities for this statement, he proceeds, "But whilst we hold that almost every doctrine of religion is contained in the Scriptures, yet we maintain that there are *some few* doctrines which are *not expressly* contained therein; and that there are many others contained therein which *are obscure*. Of this we have a proof in the immense diversity of opinions which we find amongst those who make Scripture their only rule. We maintain, therefore, that Scripture is not *the only rule* of faith; that there are *some few doctrines* handed down to us exclusively, and others *more expressly manifested*, by the *unwritten word*, forming a part of the good tidings which Christ came from heaven to communicate; and this is called *tradition*. *These two parts complete the rule of faith of the catholic church.*" (pp. 27, 28.) "Tradition forms a part of the rule which Christ left to his church, and as Protestants exclude tradition, they have not a complete rule of faith." (Ib. p. 118.)

It is difficult to conceive how our opponents can have fallen into a mistake so important, and one which, though no doubt inadvertently made, looks very strange, because it tends to make the reader suppose that there is an important difference between their doctrine and that of the Romanists, when in fact they are substantially identical. If, however, our opponents have any doubts remaining about the mistake, I will supply them with several other references in confirmation of the preceding.¹

¹ It is worthy of observation that we have had not long since in our own church a practical proof of what the principles of the Tractators on this subject may lead to, and an acknowledgment of their identity with those of the Church of Rome of a very remarkable kind. I allude to the case of the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Spencer. It is quite true that this is not a *proof* of the identity for which we contend, but it is a practical argument in favour of it which wise men will not think lightly of. Thus writes Mr. Spencer himself on the subject. "I could hardly fail telling him that in becoming a Catholic I had come into the principles which Mr. Sikes and he himself held in common, and on which Mr. Sikes had done so much to endeavour to lead me to without effect; because I used always to conceive the principles of church-authority, which when proposed to me by Catholics afterwards I embraced, quite inconsistent with the pretensions of the Church of England, and with the principles of the Reformation, to which both Mr. Sikes and I adhered. I have publicly stated that one step in my approximation to catholicity was owing to the conversation of a Protestant clergyman with whom I happened to pass an evening a year before my conversion. The clergyman was the late Mr. Vaughan, brother to Sir Henry Halford, in argument with whom I was main-

Lastly, let the reader compare the doctrine of our opponents with the following summary of the Romish doctrine of the rule of faith, given by Dr. Hawardine,¹ in his *Treatise on that subject*.² Dr. Hawardine sums up the Romish doctrine on the sub-

staining the principle which I held most strenuously of regarding nothing but the Scriptures as my guide. He made me observe for the first time, what it was strange enough I had never before observed, that the Scriptures were not the original rule of faith delivered as such by the apostles to the church, and he pressed me with arguments to show that the tradition of the church must be attended to, [that is, as part of the rule of faith]. This part of his argument I took little notice of, because I was quite clear that *in our hands the principle was untenable*; but I felt ever after, that I wanted something more explicit than the simple Scriptures to give me an assurance of faith, and I was the more ready to embrace the Catholic doctrine on the rule of faith when at length it came to be consistently proposed to me. . . . I am convinced the argument you hold against the high churchmen of the Establishment is unanswerable." (British Magazine for May, 1840, pp. 530, 531.)

No wonder that the Romanists are exulting in the success of the Tractators, and congratulating themselves upon a great and speedy addition to their ranks from those who have made such advances towards them; among the many testimonies of which that might be quoted, I will content myself with the following from the "Catholic Magazine" for March, 1839.

"Most sincerely and unaffectedly do we tender our congratulations to our brethren of Oxford, that their eyes have been opened to the evils of private judgment, and the consequent necessity of curbing its multiform extravagance. It has been given to them to see the dangers of the ever-shifting sands of the desert in which they were lately dwelling, and to strike their tents and flee the perils of the wilderness. They have already advanced a great way on their return towards that church within whose walls the wildest imagination is struck with awe," &c.—"We can—we do forgive them,—that, urged by the clamour of their opponents, many of them exhibit towards us an extreme degree of intolerance, *by way of proving their abhorrence of such of our tenets as they do not as yet hold, and exhibiting themselves as good and true men to the eyes of their brethren.*"—"Some of the brightest ornaments of their church have advocated a re-union with the church of all times and all lands; and the accomplishment of the design, if we have read aright the "signs of the times," is fast ripening. Her maternal arms are ever open to receive back repentant children; and as, when the prodigal son returned to his father's house, the fatted calf was killed, and a great feast of joy made, even so will the whole of Christendom rejoice greatly when so bright a body of learned and pious men as the authors of the 'Tracts for the Times' shall have made *the one step* necessary to place them again within that sanctuary, where alone they can be safe from the moving sands beneath which they dread being overwhelmed. The consideration of this step will soon inevitably come on; and it is with the utmost confidence that we predict the accession to our ranks of the entire mass."³

The Tractators boast of having the great majority of our able and learned divines in their favour. Will they have the kindness to inform us when and where those divines were so addressed by members of the Church of Rome?

"A person of consummate knowledge in all ecclesiastical affairs, scholastic, moral, and historical, and, to do him justice, perhaps the present age cannot show his equal."—Dod. "Dr. Hawardine's works are distinguished for brevity, accuracy, clearness, order, and close reasoning."—Butler.

¹ The rule of faith truly stated. 1721. 12mo. Pt. 2, pp. 275 et seq.

² pp. 175, 6.

ject in the following twelve rules. "*First rule.* The doctrine of Christian religion which the apostles delivered by word of mouth was of equal authority with their writings. *Second rule.* What *directions* soever the apostles were inspired to give for *the exercise of religion* were of equal authority with their writings. *Third rule.* The distance of the present age from that of the apostles is no just exception against the certainty and authority of apostolical tradition. *Fourth rule.* Some points of Christian religion are certainly known by apostolical tradition, which in particular are not *plain* in the *Holy Scripture alone.* *Fifth rule.* *All the chief articles of Christianity are contained in the Holy Scripture.*" "This rule," he adds afterwards, "is I think beyond dispute." "*Sixth rule.* All the chief and most necessary articles of Christianity are *plain* in the Holy Scripture, if we consider it in that *sense* in which it is and always has been understood by the faithful. *Seventh rule.* Considering the Holy Scripture in that sense in which it was always understood by the faithful, all the articles of religion which it is necessary for *every* Christian to know are *plain* in it. *Eighth rule.* The Holy Scripture evidently contains *in general* all points whatsoever of Christian religion. *Ninth rule.* All points of religion may be solidly *proved* by *arguments* grounded on the Holy Scripture; and by them all heresies may be solidly confuted. *Tenth rule.* Some controversies of religion may be decided by the *Holy Scripture alone.* *Eleventh rule.* The true church may be found out by Scripture alone. *Twelfth rule.* Whatever contains the chief and most distinguishing articles of Christian religion may be truly called *the rule of faith.*" Such is the Romish doctrine of the divine rule of faith and practice, as given by Dr. Hawardine; and his comment upon these twelve rules, which is too long to transcribe here, identifies his doctrine still more completely with that of our opponents. The reader will not fail to observe that by the last of these rules it is contrived that Scripture shall be *called* "the rule of faith," but in a sense which makes it far from being really the rule. In his explication of the twelfth rule, he says, "Hence the Books of the New Testament may not improperly be called *the rule of Christian religion.*"¹ The same remark is made, as we shall see hereafter, by Mr. Newman, and apparently for the same reason, viz. in order to explain away some passages of the Fathers in which it is so called, and which therefore render it necessary that the *name* should in some way or other be admitted.

It would be easy to multiply such extracts, and I may just refer the reader to the statements of the Roman Catholic opponent

¹ p. 306.

of the late Rev. Ralph Churton (no *low Churchman*) on this subject as almost identical with those which are now, alas! put forward by divines of the Church of England.¹

But having given sufficient to enable the reader to compare the doctrine of the two parties upon the subject, I pass on to the more important task of examining its pretensions.

¹ See Reply to Rev. R. Churton, by F. Eyre, of Warkworth, Esq. Lond. 1798, 8vo. pp. 116—119; &c.

CHAPTER IV

THAT THERE ARE NO WRITINGS EXTANT ENTITLED TO THE NAME
OF APOSTOLICAL TRADITIONS BUT THE CANONICAL SCRIPTURES.

IN entering upon the inquiry whether there remain to us any apostolical traditions besides the Scriptures of the apostles in the New Testament, the first point which we have to ascertain is, whether there are any *writings* extant entitled to that name.

That there are writings claiming to be so considered is well known. Such, for instance, are various apocryphal gospels and epistles, the apostolical canons, the apostolical constitutions, and various liturgies called by the names of the apostles. With respect to all these, however, it is so generally agreed that they cannot be considered the genuine productions of the apostles, that it is unnecessary to notice them any further in this place.

But besides these there is one relic of antiquity which has been contended for by some as a genuine relic of the apostles, and for which Mr. Newman evidently claims an apostolical origin and authority,—namely, what is commonly called *the Apostles' Creed*. Mr. Newman calls it “the formal symbol which the apostles adopted, and bequeathed to the church;” (p. 270;) “a collection of definite articles set apart from the first;” (p. 296;) and says that it “is of the nature of a written document, and has an evidence of its apostolical origin, the same in kind with that for the Scriptures.” (p. 297.) And upon such grounds he would make it part of the *authoritative* rule of faith.

Now, however great may be the value to be attached to this venerable relic of the primitive church, such claims as are here made in its behalf are utterly without foundation. Indeed, to hear such a claim advanced for it in the present day is not a little remarkable. To say with Mosheim, “All who have the *least knowledge* of antiquity look upon this opinion as *entirely false*, and destitute of *all* foundation,”¹ would perhaps seem inconsistent

¹ Eccl. Hist. Pt. 2, c. 3. Engl. transl. vol. I, p. 103.

with the remarks which have dropped from the pen of one or two learned men on the subject; but certainly I will venture to say, that Mr. Newman will find an overwhelming majority of the learned divines of the last three centuries *who have examined the subject*, altogether against him.¹

As this matter is of some moment, I will enter somewhat fully into it, and in proof of the statement just made will endeavour to establish the following positions.

1. That no precise form of words was left by the apostles as the Christian Creed.

2. That there was no such definite summary of the chief articles of belief given by the apostles to the Christian church as the Creed, and that what is called "the Apostles' Creed" is merely the antient Creed of the Church of Rome, and no more entitled to the name than any other of the antient Creeds.

3. That what is called "the Apostles' Creed" gradually attained its present form, and that two at least of the articles it now contains were not inserted in it before the fourth century.

4. That the Creeds of the primitive church were derived originally from the Holy Scriptures.

And therefore

5. That none of the antient Creeds can be considered as an apostolical production.

1. That no precise form of words was left by the apostles as the Christian Creed.

On this point we naturally refer, first, to the canonical Scriptures of the apostles and disciples of our Lord. And considering the nature of those writings we might not unreasonably expect to find some notice of such a formula having been published by them, if so it had been. But for such a notice we shall search in vain. Mr. Newman indeed, without any hesitation, but also without any proof, maintains the contrary, and silently assuming the correctness of his own private interpretation of one or two passages that seem to him to favour his views, boldly tells us of St. Paul "*quoting*" the Creed, and even the name he gives to it. For after observing that history tells us the Creed was drawn up in the apostles' days, he adds, "Indeed St. Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians so speaks of it, *when quoting part of it*, viz. as that which had been committed to him, and which he had committed in turn to his converts. (1 Cor. xv. 3.)" (p. 281.) "To guard and to transmit it, [i. e. the Creed,] not to remodel it, is her sole duty, *as St. Paul has determined in his second epistle to Timothy.*" (p. 287.) "*It is delineated and recog-*

¹ See *Walch*. Introd. in lib. symb. lib. l. c. 2. *Budd*, *Isag. ad Theolog. lib. l. c. 2. § 2.* *King's Hist. of the Apostles' Creed*; *Pearson*; *Barrow*; &c.

nised in Scripture itself, where it is called the *Hypotyposis*, or 'outline of sound words.'" (p. 297.)

These cool assumptions are certainly very convenient, because they cut all knots at once, and by many readers are doubtless much preferred to the cautious and guarded statements of one who has well weighed his positions, and speaks only according to the evidence he possesses, but nevertheless must not be allowed to usurp the place of proof by one who wishes to know the truth. On what authority has Mr. Newman made these confident assertions of St. Paul quoting "the Creed?" There is not a word about "the Creed" in either of the passages here referred to, nor, as it appears to me, would the expressions lead to Mr. Newman's view of their meaning, even if we knew from independent sources, that a Creed had been at that time drawn up. In the first passage the apostle says, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," &c. (1 Cor. xv. 3.) Now compare this passage with one just preceding it, in the eleventh chapter, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread," &c. (xi. 23.) The expressions are all but identical, and surely, therefore, the obvious mode of interpreting the passage in the 15th is by that in the 11th chapter, where there is evidently no quotation from the Creed. And if any thing further is wanting to show that the apostle did not "receive" his faith from "the Creed," we have it in his own words in his epistle to the Galatians, where he says, "The gospel which was preached of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. i. 11, 12.) So much then for this "quotation from the Creed." The next passage is an exhortation to Timothy, "Hold fast the form (or, outline) of sound words which thou has heard of me," &c. Ἰπποκρίσειν ἐχὶ ὑγιαίνεται λόγῳ, ὃν παρ' ἐμοῦ ἤκουσας. (2 Tim. i. 13.) Now the construction of these words in the original completely overthrows Mr. Newman's interpretation. For the apostle does not say that Timothy had "heard from him" "an outline of sound words," but that he had heard from him sound words, of which he was to hold fast the outline, that is, the great characteristic features. The English reader will observe that the word "which" refers to the "sound words;" so that the meaning of the passage would be more accurately conveyed to the English reader by the following translation: "Hold fast the form (or, outline) of those sound words which thou hast heard of me." I admit that the passage has often been quoted in the sense which Mr. Newman has attributed to it, and a remarkable instance it is among the many that might be mentioned, of the

way in which observations are handed down from one to another and repeated on the mere authority of their having once been made.¹

I repeat, then, we shall search Scripture in vain for any even the slightest intimation that the apostles drew up a Creed for the use of the Church. And it is hardly to be credited that had the apostles drawn up such a formula, we should have had no notice of it in the Acts of the Apostles.

Further; if there was such a form of words where is it? which form, among all the various ones which have come down to us, is that of the apostles? The form called by us "the Apostles' Creed" is not to be traced higher than the fourth century. And the forms given in the early writers vary much both from this and among themselves.

For instance, the earliest extant is in Irenæus, who, having spoken of "the unalterable rule (*κανον*) of truth which he received by baptism," (*ὅτι διὰ τοῦ βαπτισματος ἐλάβη*) gives "the faith preached by the church" thus, — "The church, though scattered over all the world from one end of the earth to the other, received from the apostles and their disciples the belief in one God, the Father Almighty who made the heaven, and the earth, and the seas, and all things that are in them; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who preached by the prophets the dispensations, and the advents, and the birth by a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Jesus Christ our Lord, and his advent from heaven in the glory of the Father to restore (*ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι*) all things, and to raise all flesh of all mankind, that to Christ Jesus our Lord and God and Saviour and King, according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father, every knee should bow of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess to him, and that he may execute just judgment upon all; that he may send the spirits of wickedness and transgressing and apostate angels, and all impious and wicked and lawless and blasphemous men into everlasting fire; and to

¹ Another instance, I would humbly submit, is in the common application of Matt. xvi. 18. "The gates of hell (or, *hades*) shall not prevail against it." (*καταχύσεν αὐτὰς*.) The idea is that of prevailing by superior strength to keep an adversary down. This text is almost always quoted as a promise that Satan shall never destroy Christ's church on earth; and is so applied by Mr. Newman. (p. 249.) But what can the gates of *hades* have to do with the church on earth? But viewing *hades* as the place of departed spirits, where they remain till the resurrection, the passage is clear, and the excellence of the promise at once seen. It is a promise that the church shall not remain always in that place of intermediate rest, but shall be ultimately delivered from it by him who "hath the keys of *hades* and of death." (Rev. i. 18.)

the just and holy, and those that have kept his commandments, and remained steadfast in his love, some from the beginning, others after repentance, having given life, may confer on them immortality, and put them in possession of eternal glory."¹

The same writer, however, having occasion again to refer to the rule of faith, which he now calls, "the order, or rule, of that tradition which the apostles delivered to those to whom they committed the churches," gives it in the following words,— "Believing in one God, the maker of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them, through Christ Jesus the Son of God; who on account of his extraordinary love for his creature, submitted to be born of a virgin, uniting man to God in his own person, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rising again, and being received in glory, shall come in glory as the Saviour of those who are saved, and the Judge of those who are condemned, sending the corrupters of the truth (*transfiguratores veritatis*) and the despisers of his Father and of his advent into eternal fire"²

Passing from Irenæus to one who flourished shortly after him, viz. Tertullian, we have a "Rule of faith" delivered to us in quite different terms. Tertullian himself, indeed, gives it us in three different forms of words.

In his book, "On prescription against heretics," he says,— "The rule of faith,—that we may now at once state what we believe,—is that by which we believe that there is but one God, and no other beside, the maker of the world, who produced all things out of nothing by his Word which he sent forth first of all things. That that Word was called his Son, was seen at various times by the patriarchs under the name of God, was always heard by the prophets, and at last was brought down by the Spirit and power of God the Father into the Virgin Mary, and made flesh in her womb; and being born of her, lived in the person of Jesus Christ; that from that time he preached a new law and a new promise of the kingdom of heaven; that he performed miracles, was crucified, rose again the third day, and being taken up into heaven, sat at the right hand of the Father, and in his stead sent the power of the Holy Spirit to guide believers; and that he shall come with glory to take the saints into the fruition of eternal life and the heavenly promises, and adjudge the wicked to everlasting fire, having restored to life both the one and the other, and raised their bodies." "This rule," he adds, "instituted by Christ, raises no disputes among us except such as heresies introduce, or such as make heretics."³

Again, in his treatise "On virgins being veiled," he says, "The

¹ Irenæ. Adv. hæret. lib. i. c. 10. Mass. c. 2. Grab.

² Adv. hæret. lib. iii. c. 8.

³ De Præscript. adv. hæret. c. 13.

Rule of Faith is but one, alone unchangeable and unreformable, namely, of believing in one God Almighty, the maker of the world, and his Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised the third day from the dead, received in the heavens, and now sitting at the right hand of the Father, who shall come to judge the quick and the dead by the resurrection of the flesh."¹

He refers to it again in his Treatise against Praxeas, where he states it thus ;—" We believe indeed one God, nevertheless under this dispensation, which we call *æconomy*, namely, that there is also a Son of that one God, to wit, his Word, who proceeded from him, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made ; that he was sent by the Father into a virgin, and born of her man as well as God, the Son of man and the Son of God, and called Jesus Christ ; that he suffered and was dead and buried according to the Scriptures, and raised again by the Father, and taken back again into the heavens, and now sits at the right hand of the Father, about to come to judge the quick and the dead, from whence also he sent from the Father according to his promise the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, as the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father and Son and Holy Spirit." And he adds, that " this rule had come down from the beginning of the Gospel." (*Hanc regulam ab initio Evangelii decucurrisse.*)²

The passages we have just quoted are, as far as I can find, (and as is generally understood,) the only passages in the writings extant of the first two centuries in which we have a formal and succinct delivery of the chief articles of the Christian belief, the next occurring in the writings of Origen, who flourished towards the middle of the next century.

It follows, therefore, I conceive, beyond doubt, that there was no form of words left by the Apostles as the Christian Creed ; for had there been, that doubtless would have been quoted in these passages. Had there been such a form left by the Apostles, there can be no doubt that it would have been religiously preserved by the church, and recognized in such passages as those we have quoted. But for the first three centuries and more there is not the slightest indication given us that the Apostles left such a form. Each person who has occasion to give a summary of the chief articles of the faith, gives it in different words, and if more than once, does not himself give always the same form. The silence of the Nicene Council upon the matter is particularly observable, because then at least there would have been a recognition of such a form had it existed. There were then no

¹ De virgin. veland. c. 1.

² Lib. adv. Prax. c. 2.

difficulties in the way to prevent its being openly brought forward if there had been such a formula, for persecution had then ceased, and there could be no reason for concealing it, especially when they were about to promulge one intended for the same purposes as this is supposed to have answered. The rise of heresies might have rendered some addition desirable, but there would have been at least some respectful recognition of the formula left by the Apostles had there been such. The silence of this council upon the subject appears to me conclusive against the idea.

Further, the early Fathers apply themselves to prove the Articles of the Creeds they give, from the writings of the Apostles, which obviously would have been altogether useless and absurd for one composed by the Apostles. Such a Creed would in fact have formed a portion of the Canonical Scriptures, and a portion of the highest authority, as sanctioned by the unanimous voice of the Apostles.

If it is replied, from a misunderstanding of the words of Jerome, (quoted in the next page) that "the Creed" was not written but delivered orally from one to another, I answer, that this is evidently a misinterpretation of his words, for "the Creed" had been before that time delivered without hesitation in writing by Ruffinus, and so had been the Jerusalem form of it by Cyril, to say nothing of the forms given by Irenæus and Tertullian, and therefore the meaning of Jerome, when he says, that "the Creed is not written on paper or with ink, but on the fleshly tables of the heart," is, that true Christians, as a body, were to inscribe it on their hearts, and not on paper, which would be useless; and perhaps there may be also an allusion to the fact that "the Creed" was not to be written by the baptised, lest the catechumens might peruse it before they were prepared to receive the faith it contained, as we learn from Cyril.¹ But such passages do not mean that "the Creed" was not to be anywhere written, for authors that make similar remarks have themselves left it in writing, as for instance Cyril and Ruffinus.²

It is not till the close of the fourth century that we meet with the report of its being composed by the Apostles. We do not even find the name "the Apostles' Creed," (a name which might have been given to it on many other grounds than from the Apostles having been considered its authors) earlier than a letter of Ambrose, written about the year 389.³ The *first* assertion of its having been composed by the Apostles is found in Ruffinus,

¹ Catech. 5. sub fin. ed. Milles. § 7. p. 75.

² Ruff. in Symbol. *prope init.*

³ *Credatur symbolo Apostolorum, quod Ecclesia Romana intemeratum semper custodit et servat.* Ad Siricium. Ep. 42. Ed. Bened. (Par. 1836, tom. iv. p. 338.) The earlier works to which reference has been made, are all long ago

who, in his Exposition of the Creed, written about the year 390, tells us that it was *said* to be written by them,¹ though he himself, in a subsequent part of the same Treatise, speaks in a manner that shows he at least felt doubts on the subject.² Jerome also speaks of the Creed as having been delivered by the Apostles,³ and similar language is held respecting it by several writers in the fifth and sixth centuries,⁴ and those that follow,⁵ and hence for a time the notion gained credit that the Apostles were the authors of it. But the language of Jerome is not decisive as to what his own view of the matter was, for it may seem, as Du Pin supposes it to mean, merely that the Creed contained the apostolical faith. And his great contemporary Augustine, not only has nowhere in his genuine works⁶ even given to it the name of "the Apostles' Creed," but has expressly said, as we shall show presently, that it was compiled from the Scriptures.

The account of Ruffinus is this,—“Our Fathers say, that after the ascension of our Lord . . . the Apostles . . . went each to different nations. Therefore, being about to separate from each other, they settle among themselves beforehand a rule for their future preaching, *lest perchance when apart from one another, they should preach to those who were invited to the faith of Christ doctrines at all dissimilar.* Therefore, being assembled all together and filled with the Holy Spirit, they compose that short summary of their future preaching, putting together what each one thought fit to supply, and resolve that this should be given to the faithful as a rule.”

And the Author of the Sermon numbered 115 of the “*Sermones de Tempore*,” of Augustine, kindly tells us what articles each Apostle supplied, Thomas supplying the words, “he descended into hell,” and Simon Zelotes, “the communion of saints,”

confessed to be spurious, as Clem. Rom. Ep. ad Jacob. Constit. Apostol. lib. vii. c. 41.

¹ “Tradunt majores nostri,” &c. Expos. in Symb. § 2.

² “Cautissime autem qui *symbolum tradiderunt* etiam tempus quo hæc sub Pontio Pilato gesta sunt designaverunt.” Ib. § 20. Ed. Pamel. Col. Agripp. 1617.

³ In *symbolo fidei et spei nostræ*, quod ab Apostolis traditum non scribitur in charta et atramento sed in tabulis cordis carnalibus, post confessionem Trinitatis et unitatem ecclesiæ omne Christiani dogmatis sacramentum carnis resurrectione concluditur. Ad Pammach. adv. error. Jo. Hierosol. (written about the year 397.) Ed. Bened. tom. iv. col. 323. Vall. Ven. ii. 435.

⁴ Leo Magn. Ep. 13. Jo. Cassian. De incarn. Dom. lib. v. Venantius Fortunatus, Expos. Symb. in Præfat. Isidor. Hispal. Orig. lib. vi. c. 9. Vigil. Taps. Adv. Eutych. lib. iv.

⁵ Raban. Maur. De instit. cler. lib. ii. c. 56, and others.

⁶ Serm. 115 and 181 of his *Sermones de Tempore* are confessedly spurious and rejected by the Benedictines.

which articles, as is well known, were not in the Creed till some two centuries *at least* after the death of the Apostles.

A very pretty story, but coming rather too late in the day in the year 390, to make much impression, and withal not very complimentary to inspired men, that they should be so careful to confer with one another before they separated, lest they should preach different doctrines.

We assert further,

2. That there was no such definite summary of the chief articles of belief given by the Apostles to the Christian Church, as "the Creed;" and that what is called "the Apostles' Creed" is merely the antient Creed of the Church of Rome, and no more entitled to the name than any other of the antient Creeds.

In the first place, as we observed on the former head, Scripture is silent as to their having left any such summary.

That they required a confession of faith from candidates for baptism is doubtless true, but how far that confession extended we have at least no evidence in Scripture, and the only recorded confession is, I think, that of the Ethiopian eunuch,—“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,”—which was evidently accepted by Philip as a sufficient baptismal confession, and which might be said to include virtually a confession of the whole Trinity. (Acts viii. 37.) And a similar confession is spoken of on other occasions as involving virtually an avowal of the Christian faith. (See ch. xvi. 31.)

So much, then, is of course freely granted, that the Apostles required a confession of faith previous to baptism, which *might* and probably did include several of the articles now in "the Apostles' Creed." But as to the extent of that confession, or that it had any definite limits, there is at least no evidence upon which we can depend. Ingenious as are the conjectures which have been offered, founded upon the catechetical instructions of the Apostles, that such and such articles must have formed part of the baptismal Creed, they are but conjectures, and grounded upon a mode of argument which would prove too much; for if, as has been argued, the articles of the resurrection of the dead and life everlasting are to be admitted, because the Apostle mentions in one place the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment as doctrines belonging to the "foundation," on the same ground we must conclude that "the doctrine of baptism and of laying on of hands" formed part of that Creed in the time of the Apostles.

Moreover, had there been such a fixed and definite summary there would not have been so great a variation in the confessions given by the early writers. Had there been a collection of certain definite articles made by the Apostles, and left with the

church, on the understanding that those were the articles which should form the Creed, there would not have been this variation.

Nor can there be any doubt that we should have had some reference to this fact in the Fathers of the first three centuries, and the proceedings of the Nicene Council. They would have told us, especially when delivering "the rule of faith," that the Apostles had left a rule of faith consisting of certain definite articles; but instead of this, when giving the Rule of faith, they vary in the number of articles given, and uniformly leave out some of those given in our present Creed.

Nay, more, the summaries given by *the same* Father vary in extent, so as to show that the selection was made by the individual writer. And all that is stated merely amounts to this, that the summary so given was agreeable to the faith delivered by the Apostles, that *the faith* delivered in it had come from the Apostles.

To the argument, that unless there had been such a summary there would not have been the similarity we find in these Creeds, it is quite a sufficient answer to refer to the parting direction of our Lord to his disciples, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," (Matt. xxviii. 19,) in which we find at once the rudiments of the earliest Creeds, and *from which "the Creed" appears to have derived its origin.*

Such is the view taken of this passage by the great Athanasius.

"Let us moreover," he says, "observe, that this was from the beginning the tradition and doctrine and faith of the catholic church, which *the Lord gave*, and the Apostles preached, and the Fathers kept. For upon this the church was founded, and he who falls away from this could not be, nor be called, a Christian. Therefore, there is a holy and perfect Trinity, &c. . . [proceeding to deliver the doctrine of the trinity] . . . And that this faith is the faith of the church, let them learn from this, that the Lord, when he sent forth his disciples, commanded them to lay *this foundation* for the church, saying, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'; and the apostles went and taught thus; and this is what is preached to every church under heaven. Therefore, since the church has this as *the foundation of its faith*, let them tell us in reply, and answer whether there is a Trinity or a Duality," &c.¹

¹ Ἰδμεν δὲ ὁμοῦ καὶ πρὸς τούτους καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν ἐκ πρώτης παραδοσὶν καὶ διδασκαλίαν καὶ πιστὴν τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἐν ᾗ ὁ κύριος ὤκειτο, οἱ δὲ ἀποστόλοι ἀνέκρουσαν, καὶ οἱ πατέρες ἐφυλάξαν· ἢ ταῦτα γὰρ ἡ ἐκκλησία τεθιμενωμένη, καὶ ὁ ταύτης ἡγεμὼν οὗτος· αὐ

And so again;—"This is the faith of the catholic church. For the Lord hath *founded and rooted it upon the Trinity, saying* to his disciples, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'"¹

And again, speaking of the name Father as being more appropriate for the first Person of the Trinity than Unbegotten, he says, "Moreover, when teaching us to pray, he [i. e. our Lord] did not say, But when ye pray, say, O God, unbegotten, but, But when ye pray, say, Our Father who art in heaven; and also he wished THE SUMMARY OF OUR FAITH to lead likewise to this [name,] where having commanded that we should be baptized, it is not in the name of the Unbegotten and the begotten, nor in the name of the Creator and the created, but in the name of Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost."²

Hence it is said in the "Catholic Letter" attributed to Athanasius, "The symbol, therefore, of our faith is the Consubstantial Trinity."³

Hence, therefore, Tertullian, after giving "the Creed," adds,

αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ λέξει, Χριστιανός. Τριὰς τῶν ὄντων καὶ τὸ πᾶν ὡς . . . Καὶ ὅτι αὕτη ἡ πίστις τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὡς, μαθεύσασθαι, πῶς ὁ μὴ Κύριος, ἀποστέλλων τοὺς Ἀποστόλους, παρηγγαλὶς τοῖς θεμέλοις τίθεται τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ, λέγων, Περὶ ὁποῦτος μαθεύσασθαι πάντα τὰ ὄντα βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος. Ὅτι δὲ Ἀποστολοὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ ἐδίδαξαν. Καὶ τοῦτο ὡς πᾶσαι τῇ ὑμῶν Ἐκκλησίᾳ το κηρύγμα. Οὐκεν τούτοις ἔχουσιν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῶν θεμέλοις τῆς πίστεως, ἐπὶ ταῦτα πάλιν ἡμεῖς ἔπειν καὶ ἀποκρυσθασάν, Τριὰς ὡς ἡ Ἀναξ; κ. τ. λ. Athanas. Epist. ad Serap. Contra eos qui dicunt, Spiritum S. creaturum esse. § 5. 28, 9. Op. ed. Ben. tom. i. Part 2. pp. 676, 7. Ed. Col. 1686. tom. i. pp. 202, 3. See also the same Treatise at §. 6. p. 653, (or p. 179.) et Epist. ad Serap. contra eos qui dicunt Filium creaturum esse, §. 6. p. 687, (or, p. 170.) the former particularly.

¹ Αὕτη τῆς καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἡ πίστις. Ἐν Τριᾷ γὰρ αὕτη θεμελιώσι καὶ ἐκρίνωσθαι ὁ Κύριος, ἀρκῶς τοῖς μαθηταῖς, Περὶ ὁποῦτος μαθεύσασθαι κ. τ. λ. Epist. ad Serap. De Spir. S. §. 6. ed. Ben. tom. i. Pt. 2. p. 695. ed. Col. tom. ii. p. 14.

² Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐκχρῆσθαι διδασκῶν, οὐκ ἔπειν, Ὅταν δὲ προσυχώσθαι λέγεται, Θεὸν Ἀληθινόν, ἀλλὰ μάλιστ', Ὅταν δὲ προσυχώσθαι λέγεται, Πατὴρ ἡμεῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. καὶ τὸ κεφάλαιον δὲ τῆς πίστεως ἡμεῖς ἐν τούτῳ συντηρεῖν ἠβόλωσιν, καὶ ὡς ἡμεῖς βαπτίζωσθαι, οὐκ ἐν ὀνόματι Ἀληθινοῦ καὶ Γεννῆτου, οὐδὲ ἐν ὀνόματι Κτιστοῦ καὶ Κτισματος, ἀλλ' ἐν ὀνόματι Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου Πνεύματος. Contra. Arianos. Orat. la. §. 34. ed. Ben. tom. i. pp. 438, 9. orat. 2a. ed. Colon. vol. i. p. 341. See also orat. 4. §. 21. tom. i. p. 633. (or, orat. 5. tom. i. p. 635.) And so in the Treatise, "Contra Sabellii Gregales," attributed to Athanasius, and supposed by Du Pin and others to be genuine though the Benedictines place it among those of doubtful genuineness, it is said, Μὴδὲ ἀρνούμενοι τὰ Τρία τῇ Μονᾷ ἑνὸς ἐν μίξῳ, ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ Τριᾷ πᾶν τὸ εἶναι, ἔχον τὸ κεφάλαιον τῆς πίστεως ἐν τῷ βαπτισμῷ καὶ ἐν ταῖς τρισὶν ἁγίαις ἐφραγίσιν. ed. Ben. tom. ii. p. 43. ed. Col. vol. i. p. 658. The "Epistola ad Jovianum," vol. ii. p. 241, (or, p. 34.) contains a similar passage, but I do not quote it as that Letter is generally considered spurious.

³ Συμβολὴν οὕτως τῆς πίστεως ἡμεῖς ὁμοῦσιν ἐν Τριᾷ. ed. Bened. tom. ii. p. 30. ed. Colon. 1686. tom. i. p. 571. This letter is considered by Du Pin and others as genuine, but the Benedictines have placed it among the doubtful.

(in a passage already quoted, pp. 99 above,) that "this rule" was "instituted by Christ."

So Basil, after giving a summary of "the Creed," *taken professedly from Scripture*, adds, "Thus we believe, and thus we baptize into the Consubstantial Trinity, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he said, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'"¹

So in the Creed of Lucian, (quoted p. 113 below,) these words of our Lord are referred to as the foundation upon which the Creed was built.

Thus also Gregory of Nyssa says, "And afterwards he [i. e. our Lord] adds the words by which they [i. e. his disciples] were about to take captive as in a net the whole earth, and *in which is contained the whole mystery of true religion*; for he says, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.'"² And so in another place he says, "We believe in accordance with that faith which our Lord set forth to the disciples, saying, 'Go and teach all nations,' &c. This is the declaration of the mystery by which, through the birth from above, our nature is changed from that which is mortal to that which is immortal."³

And thus speaks Augustin: "Who can be ignorant that it is not Christ's baptism, if the words of the Gospel, *in which the Creed is contained*, have been there wanting."⁴

Thus also Hilary: "To believers the word of God, which was transfused into our ears by the testimony of the Evangelist united with the power of its own truth, was sufficient, when the Lord says, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them,' &c. [Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.] For what is there which concerns the mystery of the salvation of man, which is not contained in it? Or what

¹ 'Ουτως φρονοῦμεν, καὶ οὕτως βαπτίζομεν ὡς Τριάδα ὁμοουσίαν, κατὰ τὴν ἐκτίλην αὐτοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπαγγελίαν, περιωθέντες μαθητεύσασαι κ. τ. λ. Sermon de fide. §. 4. ed. Bened. tom. ii. p. 228. Par. 1618. tom. ii. p. 255.

² Καὶ ἐπιφέρει λοιπὸν τὰ ῥήματα δι' οὗ ἐμύληον τὴν οὐκ ἐκ μὲν ὅλην σαρκαίναν, καὶ ἡ εἰς ἐστὶν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐκτείναντος μυστηρίου. Περιωθέντες γὰρ, φησὶ, μαθητεύσασαι πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες κ. τ. λ. De resurr. orat. 2a. (Par. 1638. tom. iii. p. 414. Par. 1615—18. tom. ii. p. 846.)

³ Πιστεύομεν ἐν καθὼς ἐξέτεο τοῖς μαθηταῖς τὴν πίστιν ὁ Κύριος ὁ ἅπας ὅτι περιωθέντες μαθητεύσασαι κ. τ. λ. [Matt. xxviii. 19.] 'Ουτος ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ μυστηρίου, ἡ αἰ διὰ τὰς αἰῶνας γνησιώσως μετασχημαζέσθαι ἡμῶν ἡ φύσις ἀπὸ τοῦ φθαρτοῦ πρὸς τὸ ἀφθαρτόν. Id. Contr. Eunom. Ed. 1615. orat. la. tom. ii. p. 2. Ed. 1638. orat. 2a. tom. ii.

⁴ Quis nesciat non esse baptismum Christi si verba Evangelica quibus symbolum constat illic defuerint. Aug. De bapt. contra Donat. lib. 6. c. 25. tom. ix. col. 176. There can be no doubt what the "verba Evangelica" mean, as he had said just before, "Deus adest Evangelicis verbis suis, sine quibus baptismus Christi consecrari non potest."

is there which remains to be said, or is obscure? All things are complete, as from one who is complete, and perfect. . . . But we are compelled, through the sins of heretics and blasphemers, to handle points of which we have no permission to speak; to climb the heights of divine truth; to speak of ineffable mysteries; to presume beyond what is revealed to us. . . . Their infidelity carries us into the region of doubt and danger, when it is necessary to put forward any thing concerning things so great and recondite beyond *the heavenly rule*. The Lord had said that the nations were to be baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. *The form (or, rule) of faith is certain*; but as it regards the heretics, the whole meaning is in dispute."¹

And lastly, thus speaks Theodoret: "'Go, said he, and teach all nations, baptizing them,' &c. And, according to this law, both the divine apostles, and the teachers of the church who followed them, teach those who come to them to believe in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and baptize those who are thus taught, in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."²

The foundation of "the Creed," therefore, was laid in these words delivered by our Lord himself. Each bishop or church baptizing according to our Saviour's command, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, required first and principally a brief confession of belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *in the terms which they thought most suitable to the orthodox faith*; and this direction of our Lord was evidently considered by the early Fathers as intimating that the sum and substance of the Christian faith consisted in such a confession; and hence Christians are called by Tertullian "those who believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."³

¹ Sufficiebat credentibus Dei sermo qui in aures nostras Evangelistæ testimonio cum ipsa veritatis sum virtute transfusus est, cum dicit Dominus, 'Euntes nunc docete omnes gentes baptizantes eos,' &c. Quid enim in eo de sacramento salutis humane non continetur? Aut quid est, quod sit reliquum aut obscurum? Plena sunt omnia ut a pleno et a perfecto perfecta. . . . Sed compellimur hæreticorum et blasphemantium vitii illicita agere, ardua scandere, ineffabilia eloqui, inconcessa presumere. . . . Horum infidelitas in anceps nos ac periculum protrahit, ut necesse sit de tantis ac tam reconditis rebus aliquid ultra præscriptum celeste proferre. Dixerat Dominus baptizandas gentes in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Forma fidei certa est; sed quantum ad hæreticos omnis sensus incertus est. Hilar. De Trin. lib. 2. §§ 1, 2, 5. Ed. Bened.

² Πισθωτικὸν γὰρ, ὅτι, μαθητεύσати. . . . Κατὰ ταῦτον δὲ τὸν νόμον καὶ οἱ ὅσιοι Ἀποστόλοι, καὶ ἡ μετ' αὐτοῦ τῆς ἐκκλησίας διδασκαλία, μαθητεύουσι τοὺς προσήκοντας ποτιῶν αὐτοὺς ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, καὶ τοὺς μαθητευόμενους βαπτίζουσι ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Πατρὸς, κ. τ. λ. Theod. Hær. Fab. lib. iv. c. 1, Ed. Schulz. tom. iv pp. 350, 1.

³ Adv. Prax. c. 2.

That any determinate amplification of this confession (i. e. one including certain fixed and definite points) was made by the Apostles, there is not the slightest ground to suppose. The testimony of the earliest Creeds is certainly opposed to such an idea; for while the degree of similarity there is among them is fully accounted for by recollecting that common foundation from which they originated, our Lord's precept for baptism, the variations they exhibit show that there was no definite confession formed upon that foundation by apostolical authority. And as the time at which some of the articles now found in "the Apostles' Creed" were inserted can be traced, (as we shall prove presently) and as these articles were inserted by ecclesiastical authority, so the articles previously inserted may have been placed there by the same authority.

"The earliest Christian Church," says L'Estrange, "knew, I conceive, no other creed, no other confession of faith, as antecedently necessary to baptism . . . than that of belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as was the direction of our Saviour relating to baptism Afterwards, as upstart heresies did administer occasion, several articles were added in opposition to those false teachers."¹ The same view of this question is taken by Bishop Stillfleet.²

"That in the more antient times," says Dr. Barrow, "there was no one form generally fixed and agreed upon, to omit other arguments that persuade it, is hence probable, for that the most learned and generally knowing persons of those times, when in their apologies against disbelievers for Christianity, or in their assertions of its genuine principles and doctrines against misbelievers, they, by the nature and sequel of their discourse, are engaged to sum up the principal doctrines of our religion, they do not yet (as reason did require, and they could hardly have avoided doing, had there been any such constantly and universally settled or avowed form) allege any such; but rather from their own observation of the common sense agreed upon, and in their own expression, set down those main doctrines wherein the chief churches did consent; as may be seen by divers of them, especially by Tertullian, the oldest of the Latins, if we compare several places wherein he delivers the rule of faith, (as he constantly calls it, that is, such a summary of Christian principles by which the truth of doctrines concerning matters therein touched might be examined;) wherein I say he delivers such rules of faith to the same purpose in sense, but in language somewhat different, yet *never referring us to any standing and more authentic*

¹ Alliance of Div. Offices, 2d ed. p. 168.

² Vindic. of Doct. of Trin. p. 225.

form. Among these forms, that which now passes under the title of the Apostles' Creed (about which we discourse) seems to have been *peculiar to the Roman Church*, and that very antiently, (as to the *chief* articles thereof, for it appears that in process of time it hath been somewhat altered, *especially by addition*;) and because it had been used from such antiquity, that its original composition and use were not known, was presumed to have derived from the Apostles, the first planters of that church (*as it was then usual to repute all immemorial customs to be deduced from apostolical tradition*;) or possibly because the Roman Church (as in common belief founded by the two great apostles, Peter and Paul) was by way of excellency, called the apostolical church, and the succession of Roman bishops *sedes apostolica*, so whatever belonged to that church obtained the same denomination; and among the rest, *the Roman symbol* might, for that reason, be called *symbolum apostolicum*; that is, *symbolum ecclesiæ apostolicæ*. For that it was compiled by joint advice, or by particular contributions of all the Apostles, is *a conceit sustained by very weak grounds, and assailed by very strong objections*; as that a matter of so illustrious remarkableness, and of so great concernment, should be no where mentioned in the Apostolic Acts, nor by any authentic record attested, (and, indeed, had it been so testified, it must have attained canonical authority;) that it was not received by all churches; and that those which used the substance thereof were so bold therewith as to alter and enlarge it, are considerations ordinarily objected thereto; but that which most effectually to my seeming doth render such original thereof altogether uncertain, (*and doth amount almost to a demonstration against it*, I mean against the truth, or, *which is all one in matters of this nature*, its *certainly* of being composed by the Apostles,) is that which I before intimated; viz. that the most antient (and those the most inquisitive and best seen in such matters) were either wholly ignorant that such a form, pretending the apostles for its authors, was extant, or did not accord to its pretence, or did not at all rely upon the authenticalness thereof; otherwise (as I before urged) it is hardly possible that they should not have in most direct and express manner alleged it, and used its authority against those wild heretics who impugned some points thereof."¹

I conclude this head with the following observation of the Bishop of Lincoln. "The inference to be drawn from a comparison of different passages scattered through Tertullian's writings is, *that the Apostles' Creed in its present form was not known*

¹ Exposition on the Creed, *init.* See his works, Oxf. 1818, vol. v. pp. 321—3. VOL. 1.

to him as a summary of faith; but [of which there can be no doubt] that the various clauses of which it is composed were generally received as articles of faith by orthodox Christians."¹

So little ground has Mr. Newman for his remark,—“This elementary confession [i. e. “I believe in Jesus Christ”] seems, even before the Apostles’ death, to have been *expanded and moulded into form, and in that form or type it has remained up to this day in the Baptismal Service*. I say this was done in the Apostles’ days, *because history bears witness to the fact*, calling it ‘the Creed,’ ‘the Apostles’ Creed,’ the treasure and legacy of faith which the Apostles had left to their converts.” (p. 260.) That it may be said to contain “*the faith* which the apostles had left to their converts,” is very true, (and we can *prove* it by their writings,) but this is no proof that the Creed was “moulded into form” in the days of the apostles; and when Mr. Newman adds that “this was done in the Apostles’ days, *because history bears witness to the fact*, calling it ‘the Creed,’ ‘the Apostles’ Creed,’” he very sadly misrepresents the real state of the case. *It is not till quite the close of the fourth century that we hear anything about “the Apostles’ Creed.”* The name (*symbolum apostolorum*) certainly is given to the Creed about that period by some writers, *but only in the Latin church*,² and the period at which they lived is evidently too late to admit of their evidence being considered as sufficient to establish such a matter. So that from the time of Erasmus very few authors of repute have maintained the opinion that the Creed was, strictly speaking, an apostolical formula. Indeed how to account for such statements from a student of antiquity I know not.

That “the Apostles’ Creed,” and all the other Creeds of the orthodox, might be said to be “the faith (or, creed) delivered by the holy apostles,”³ “the holy and apostolical faith,” (or, creed,⁴) as they are often called by the Fathers, is no doubt true, because they may be proved from Scripture, but this is very different to speaking of the Apostles as the authors of the formulæ themselves, which, had it been the case, would have been stated by the Fathers in defence of them, and have rendered their proofs of the statements contained in them from the writings of the Apostles unnecessary.

¹ Eccl. Hist. illustrated from Tertullian, p. 324.

² I say this on the authority of Du Pin, himself a Romanist.

³ As Epiphanius says of a Creed given by him as the baptismal Creed of his church, and which differs much both from that called “the Apostles’,” and the Nicene,—*Και αὐτὴ μὲν ἡ πίστις παραβλήσεται ἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχαίων ἀποστόλων καὶ τῆ ἐκκλησίας τοῦ ἀρχαίου πολὺ ἀπὸ πάντων ὁμῶν τῶν ἀρχαίων ἐπισκοπῶν ὑπὲρ τριακοσίων ἔτη ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ*. Epiph. Anchor. sub. fin. Op. ed. Petav. v. 2. p. 123.

⁴ As Cyril calls the Creed which he gives of the Church of Jerusalem—*Ἀρχαία καὶ ἀποστολική πίστις*. Cat. 18. Ed. Milles. p. 274.

The Creed called by us "the Apostles' Creed," therefore, has got that name *appropriated* to it with us merely through the partiality of some authors of repute in the Latin church at the end of the fourth century to the Creed of *their own church*, for it has clearly no more right to the title than the Creeds of the Oriental churches, of which the most antient extant are those of the churches of Cæsarea and Jerusalem,¹ given respectively by Eusebius of Cæsarea (as already quoted) and Cyril of Jerusalem, (both of them, by the way, more antient writers than any from whom we have the Creeds of the Latin church,) nor have any of those Creeds a better right to the title than the Creeds of the Councils of Nice and Constantinople.² Each of these Creeds is, in fact, an exposition by one or more pastors of the church, of the faith delivered by the apostles, (whether taken from their oral or written tradition is hereafter to be considered;) an exposition *gradually* extended from that simple confession of faith required from the eunuch by Philip, (Acts viii. 37,) or that confession of faith in the Trinity, to which our Lord's directions for baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19) would lead. And that which is commonly called among us "the Apostles' Creed," we might more properly name, with Dr. Barrow, the antient *Roman Creed*, to distinguish it from those of Jerusalem and Nice and others, which are equally entitled with it to the name of *the Apostles' Creed*. And so, indeed, it is called by Ruffinus.³ In fact the appellation is merely due to the spirit in which the Church of Rome has acted from a very early period,⁴ attempting to obtain currency for all her rites and usages, by calling them apostolical.

It is maintained,

3. That what is called "the Apostles' Creed" gradually attained its present form, and that two at least of the Articles it now contains were not inserted in it before the fourth century.

It will have been already observed that in the Creeds or confessions of faith just quoted from the works of Irenæus and Ter-

¹ I do not notice the Creed given by some writers as the antient Oriental Creed, derived from the Exposition of Ruffinus upon the Creed, because it is derived from thence merely by inferential reasoning. The Creed which he there gives is, as he himself tells us, the Creed of the church of Aquileia, but from his occasional notice of some discrepancies between that and the Creeds of Rome and the churches of the East, it has been taken for granted that these latter Creeds were precisely the same as that of Aquileia, which he gives, except in the passages he has noted. This may be so, but it is merely conjecture.

² This Creed has in fact been called "the Apostles' Creed" even in the Latin church, which may suggest the probability that this title was not always intended to imply that the Apostles had delivered the formula, but only the faith contained in it. In an antient missal in use in the Latin church about the year 700, it is said of this Creed, "*Finito Symbolo Apostolorum, dicat sacerdos*," &c. Miss. ed Argent. 1557, p. 41. See Usher, *De trib. symb.* p. 16.

³ See p. 118 below.

⁴ See Firmilian's Letter to Cyprian.

tullian, the faith is comprised in the articles relating to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, none of those which follow in our present Creed being introduced except that of the resurrection of the flesh, which is connected with the articles relating to the Son, nor that of the descent into hell. Such also is the case in all the Creeds down to that of the Nicene Council, that also included.

For the satisfaction of the reader, I will here add them in the order in which they occur.

Among them may be noticed the statement made by Origen at the beginning of his work, "On first principles," wherein he lays down the doctrines maintained, as he conceives, by successional delivery in the churches from the time of the apostles, though this statement is hardly to be reckoned a brief summary of the chief articles of the faith, taking, as it seems, a much wider range. However the reader will find it in the next chapter.

There is, however, in a work attributed to Origen a delivery of such a summary as follows:—"I believe that there is one God and Creator and Maker of all things, and God the Word derived from him, consubstantial, eternal, who in the last times took upon him human nature of Mary, and was crucified and rose again from the dead. And I believe also the Holy Ghost, who is eternal."¹ This work, however, is not considered to be a genuine work of Origen.

The next in order is the Creed of Gregory of Neocæsarea commonly called Gregory Thaumaturgus, which he caused to be used in his own church, and which, if we believe Gregory Nyssen's account in his life of him, was revealed to him in a vision from heaven. It runs thus:—"There is one God, the Father of the living Word, the subsisting Wisdom and Power, and the eternal Image [of the Father]. A perfect Begetter of a perfect Being, a Father of an only-begotten Son. There is one Lord, one of one, God of God, the character and image of the God-head, the operative Word, Wisdom comprehending the system of the universe, and Power creative of the whole creation, a true Son of a true Father, invisible of invisible, and incorruptible of incorruptible, and immortal of immortal, and eternal of eternal. And there is one Spirit, who has his existence from God, and through the Son, was manifested to men, a perfect image of the perfect Son, Life, the Cause of those that live, the Fountain of holiness, Sanctity, the Author of sanctification; in whom is manifested God the Father, who is above all and in all, and God the Son who pervades all. A perfect Trinity, neither divided nor separated from one another in glory, eternity, or dominion. In this Trinity, therefore, there is nothing created or servile, nor anything in-

¹ De recta in Deum fide sive Dial. Contr. Marcion, § 1. Op. Orig. tom. i. p. 804.

troduced into it as not existing before and afterwards added to it. Never, therefore, was the Father without the Son, nor the Son without the Spirit, but the same Trinity existed always unchanged and invariable."¹

The next is the Creed of Lucian the Martyr, which is as follows:—"We believe agreeably to the Evangelical and Apostolical tradition [i. e. the New Testament] in one God the Father, Almighty, the Creator and Maker and Administrator of the universe, of whom are all things. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, who is God, by whom are all things; who was begotten before the worlds of the Father, God of God, whole of whole, one of one, Perfect of Perfect, King of King, Lord of Lord, the living Word, living Wisdom, the true Light, the Way, the Truth, the Resurrection, the Shepherd, the Gate, the inconvertible and unchangeable image of the Deity, the exact image of the essence, and wisdom, and power, and glory of the Father, the first-born of every creature, who was in the beginning with God, God the Word, according to what is said in the Gospel, 'And the Word was God,' by whom all things were made, and in whom all things consist; who in the last days descended from on high and was born of a virgin, according to the Scriptures, and was made man, the Mediator between God and men, the Apostle of our faith and Giver of life, as he says, 'For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him who sent me;' who suffered for us and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and shall come again with glory and power to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost, who is given to believers for their comfort and sanctification and perfecting. As also our Lord Jesus Christ commanded his disciples, saying, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' to wit, of a Father who is truly a Father, and of a Son who is truly a Son, and of a Holy Spirit who is truly a Holy Spirit; the names not being applied unmeaningly and to no purpose, but signifying precisely the proper hypostasis, and order, and glory of each of those named, that in hypostasis they are three but in consent one. Therefore holding this faith even from the beginning, and holding it to the end before God and Christ, we anathematize all heretical false doctrine; and if any one teaches contrary to the wholesome right faith of the Scriptures, saying, that there is or was a time or season or age before the Son was begotten, let him be anathema. And if any one says that the Son is a being created as one of created things, or

¹ Gregor. Thaum. Op. Ed. Par. 1622, p. 1., and Gregor. Nyss. Op. ed. Par. 1638, tom. 3, p. 546. Ed. 1615—18, tom. 2, pp. 978, 9.

procreated as one of things procreated, or made as one of things made, and not as the divine Scriptures have delivered each of the things aforesaid, or if he teaches or preaches anything else contrary to what we have received, let him be anathema. For we truly and reverently believe and follow all those things that are delivered to us from the divine Scriptures by prophets and apostles."¹

These are the only Creeds that remain of the period anterior to the Council of Nice.²

In that Council, Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, who took so leading a part in it, gave the following as the antient Creed of the church of Cæsarea, as we learn from his Letter to the inhabitants of Cæsarea, respecting the acts of this Council, preserved by Athanasius³ and others.⁴ "The formula, therefore, proposed by us, which was read before our most pious emperor, and approved as sound, runs thus,—As we received from the bishops that were before us, both in the catechetical instructions and when we were baptized, and as we have learnt from the divine Scriptures, and as we have believed and taught when holding the office of presbyter and in the episcopate itself, so still believing, we lay before you our Creed; and it is this;—We believe in one God the Father Almighty, the Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life, the only-begotten Son, the first-born of every creature, begotten of the Father before all worlds, (or, ages,) by whom also all things were made, who for our salvation was incarnate, and lived among men, and suffered, and rose again the third day, and ascended unto the Father, and shall come again in glory to judge the quick and dead. We believe also in one Holy Spirit, believing each one of these to be and exist, the Father to be truly a Father, and the Son truly a Son, and the Holy Spirit truly a Holy Spirit, as also our Lord when he sent forth his disciples to preach, said, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'"

The Creed published by the Council of Nice (preserved to us in the letter of Eusebius just quoted and in other works⁵ was as

¹ The original of this confession is to be found in Athanasius, *Epist. De Syn. Arim. et Seleuc.* § 23. and Socrat. *Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. c. 10.* A Latin translation of it is given by Hilary in his book *De Synodis*, § 29. who also vindicates its orthodoxy from the suspicion that had been attached to it from its having been referred to by the Arians, in which he is followed by Bishop Bull, (*Def. fid. Nic. ii. 13. 6.*) who proves that Lucian was the author of it, and Bingham, (*Antiq. book x. c. 4, § 6.*)

² I do not notice the Creed inserted in the Apostolical Constitutions, because they are confessedly spurious, and of very uncertain age.

³ Athen. *Epist. de decret. Syn. Nic. sub fin.*

⁴ Soer. *Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. c. 8*; Theodoret. *Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. c. 12*; &c.

⁵ Athanas. *Epist. ad Jovian.* § 3. Theodoret. *Hist. Eccl. lib. 4. c. 3.* Soer. *Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. c. 8.* Basil. *M. Epist. 125. Op. tom. 3. p. 215.* Ed. Ben. &c.

follows;—"We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only-begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made both that are in heaven and that are in earth, who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, having been made man, suffered, and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven, and shall come to judge the quick and dead. And in the Holy Spirit. And those who say that there was a time when the son of God was not, and that he was not before he was begotten, and that he was made out of nothing, or those who say that he is of another hypostasis, or substance, or that he is a creature convertible or changeable, the Catholic Church anathematizes."

Now in all these various forms it will be observed, that there is not one of them which includes more than the confession relating to the Trinity. And so the Creed is often referred to by the Fathers, as consisting of belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Thus Cyril of Alexandria says;—"For he [i. e. Christ] offers our confession, that is, our faith, which we are also accustomed rightly to make, saying, We believe in God the Father Almighty, and in one Lord Jesus Christ his Son, and in the Holy Ghost."¹ And again,—“There is made by us the confession of the right faith in one God the Father Almighty, and in one Lord Jesus Christ his Son, and in one Holy Ghost.”²

There is also a passage in the writings of Tertullian, which seems very clearly to intimate that the earliest Creed or symbol was only a confession *relating to* the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Speaking of the Holy Spirit as the “leader into *all truth*,” he adds, “which, according to *the Christian sacrament*, is in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”³ The term *sacrament* we may observe is applied by other authors also to the Creed⁴ and Ambrose compares it to the soldier’s “sacrament (or, oath) of warfare.”⁵

It was therefore the opinion of Erasmus and Vossius, that the Creed for more than three centuries did not extend further than

¹ Ἱεροῦργη γὰρ ἡμεῖς τὴν ὁμολογίαν, τοῦτοστι τὴν πίστιν, ἣν καὶ ὁρθὰς κατευθισμένη πρὸς θεὸν, λέγοντες. Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα θεὸν πατέρα παντοκράτορα· καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ· καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἁγίου. Cyril. Alex. De recta fide ad Reg. Op. ed. Aubert, tom. v. P. 2. p. 148.

² Ἡ τῆς ὁρθῆς πίστεως ὁμολογία πραττεται πρὸς ἡμᾶς εἰς ἕνα θεόν, κ. τ. λ. Id. ib. p. 158.

³ Deductorem omnis veritatis, quæ est in Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto secundum Christianum sacramentum. Adv. Prax. c. 30.

⁴ As Rufinus in Apol. adv. Hieron. lib. i. § 5. “sacramentum symboli” and Hieron. Ad Pammach. adv. Joann. Hieron. (See p. 101.)

⁵ Militiæ sacramentum. De virg. lib. 3. c. 4. § 20.

that; and their opinion is adopted by Bishop Stillingfleet;¹ and certainly as it respects that collection of articles which the earliest Fathers have pointed out to us as comprising the chief points of Christian doctrine, and called "the rule of faith," it is clear from the passages quoted above, that it did not extend further than that confession.

But then this rule of faith was not during that whole period identical with the confession required to be made at baptism; and it appears to me that the want of this distinction has occasioned much of the disagreement which appears in the various accounts given of the history of the Creed. The Creed or Rule of faith, as given by the earliest Fathers, comprised only the articles relating to the Trinity, (if we except that on the resurrection of the flesh,) and in that state probably formed for some time the whole baptismal confession, that confession being, as we have seen, derived from our Lord's precept for baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.); but it seems clear that from an early period there were *generally* added to that confession some other points, which though not at first inserted in the Creed, formed the subject of a separate interrogation at baptism.

Thus Tertullian, in his Tract on baptism, says, "But when both the declaration of faith and the promise of salvation were pledged by the Three, there is necessarily annexed the mention of the church, since where the Three are, that is, the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, there is the church, which is the body of the Three."²

And Cyprian still more clearly intimates that such was the case;—"If," he says, "any one starts this objection, that Novatian retains the same form of baptism which the catholic church holds, that he baptises with the same creed as ourselves, that he acknowledges the same God the Father, the same Son the Christ, the same Holy Spirit, and consequently that he may assume the power of baptizing, because he seems not to differ from us in the interrogation used at baptism, let such an one, whoever thinks to object this, know first, that there is not one and the same *form of Creed* to us and the schismatics, *nor the same interrogation*. For when they say, 'Dost thou believe the remission of sins and life eternal through the holy church?' they speak falsely in the interrogation, since they have not a church."³

¹ Vindication of doctrine of the Trinity, pp. 225, 6.

² Quum autem sub Tribus et testatio fidei et sponso salutis pignerentur, necessario adjicitur Ecclesiæ mentio, quoniam ubi Tres. id est, Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus, ibi Ecclesia, quæ Trium corpus est. De baptismo, c. 6. See also c. 11.

³ Quod si aliquis illud opponit, ut dicat, eandem Novatianum legem tenere, quam Catholica Ecclesia teneat, eodem symbolo, quo et nos, baptizare, eundem

And again; "The very interrogation which takes place at baptism is a witness of the truth. For when we say, 'Dost thou believe in eternal life and the remission of sins through the holy church,' we mean that remission of sins is not given but in the church."¹

In the first of these passages Cyprian clearly seems to distinguish between the symbol or Creed containing the confession relating to the Trinity from the interrogation relating to "remission of sins and life everlasting through the holy church," or at any rate his words imply that these points were the subject of a distinct and separate interrogation. And by a passage in the letter of Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea, to Cyprian, this matter is placed almost beyond doubt, where, speaking of a baptism performed by certain heretics, he says, "To which neither the Creed of the Trinity, nor the legitimate interrogation, and such as is used by the church, was wanting."²

The points noticed in the above passages, then, were clearly subjects of interrogation at baptism at *an early period*, but they did not then form part of that summary which was called "the rule of faith," which, as derived from our Lord's precept for baptism, was at first kept distinct from these additions, and always held to be the most important part of the baptismal confession.

We may add also to the preceding testimonies that of Cyril of Jerusalem. For in his fourth Catechetical Lecture, he says,— "But before the delivery of any comment upon the faith, it seems to me to be desirable now to give a compendious summary of the necessary doctrines, (*των αναγκαιων δογματων*)." He then proceeds to give the doctrines relating to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as in the Creeds already quoted, and then immediately adds,— "Retain this seal, (or, symbol or mark, *σφραγίδα*) ever in thy mind And after the knowledge of this venerable and glorious and holy faith, (or Creed, *πιστις*,) know also thyself," &c.³

nosse Deum Patrem, eundem Filium Christum, eundem Spiritum Sanctum, ac propter hoc usurpare eum potestatem baptizandi posse, quod videatur in interrogatione baptismi a nobis non discrepare, sciat, quisquis hoc opponendum putat, primum non esse unam nobis et schismaticis symboli legem, neque eandem interrogationem. Nam quam dicunt; 'credis remissionem peccatorum et vitam eternam per sanctam Ecclesiam,' mentiuntur in interrogatione, quando non habeant ecclesiam.—CYPR. Ep. ad Magn.

¹ Sed et ipsa interrogatio, quæ fit in baptismo, testis est veritatis. Nam quam dicimus, 'Credis in vitam eternam et remissionem peccatorum per sanctam Ecclesiam,' intelligimus remissionem peccatorum non nisi in Ecclesia dari.—EYRUS. Ep. ad Januarium, &c.

² Cui nec symbolum Trinitatis nec interrogatio legitima et ecclesiastica deficit. Ep. 75, inter Cypriani Ep.

³ Cyr. Hierosol. Cat. 4. §§ 2 and 12. pp. 46 and 56. ed. Milles. (Ed. Par. 1631, pp. 24 et 30.)

Proceeding, however, in the subsequent Lectures to comment upon the confession required at baptism, he says, that after the confession of faith relating to the Trinity, this followed. "In one baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and in one holy catholic church, and in the resurrection of the flesh, and in the life everlasting."¹

So that even in the time of Cyril, in the middle of the fourth century, there was a distinction between the confession relating to the Trinity and that required at baptism.

But from about this time the distinction appears to have been very much lost sight of, and the whole of the confession required at baptism was spoken of as the Creed, the Rule of faith.²

Further; it appears from the Creeds we have already quoted, that even in the part relating to the Trinity, an article which occurs in the (so called) "Apostles' Creed," viz. that relating to Christ's descent into hell, formed no part of the primitive summary of the articles of the faith. The first Creed in which it appears was one published by the Arians at the Council of Ariminum, A. D. 359, which had also been previously exhibited by them at the Council of Sirmium.³ It is also to be found in the Creed of the church of Aquileia, given by Ruffinus⁴ towards the close of this century, who, however, also tells us that this addition was not to be found in the Creed of the Roman church, nor in the churches of the East.⁵ This article, therefore, was not introduced into the Creeds of the Roman and Oriental churches until after the fourth century. That it was a doctrine taught by the Apostles⁶ and Fathers⁷ there can be no doubt, but it was not inserted in the summary of the chief articles of belief for several centuries.

Passing on to the consideration of the articles that follow that relating to the Holy Ghost, and considering the Creed as we find it when including points not relating to the Trinity, we find not

¹ Id. Cat. 18. § 11. p. 269. (Ed. 1631. p. 220.)

² Since writing the above, I have found that Dr. Waterland favours the view taken above of the brevity of the original Creed, and its being distinct from the confession required at baptism. See his "Importance of the doctrine of the Trinity," c. 6. Works, vol. v. pp. 160, 161.

³ Soer. Hist. Ecc. lib. ii. c. 37. *Και ως τα καταχθονια καταδυται.* And see lib. ii. c. 41.

⁴ Expos. in Symb. Apost.

⁵ "In Ecclesiæ Romane Symbolo non habetur additum *descendit ad inferna*; sed neque in Orientis Ecclesiis habetur hic sermo." Expos. in Symb. Ap. § 20.

⁶ Acts ii. 27. Eph. iv. 9.

⁷ Cyrill. Hieros. Cat. 4. § 8. p. 53. (Ed. 1631. p. 27.) Epiphani. Adv. Hær. lib. iii. in Expos. Fid. Cath. § 17: Iren. lib. iv. 27. ed. Mass. c. 45. ed. Grab. And see Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. i. c. ult. where an account is given of the preaching of Thaddæus at Edessa of which this article formed one topic. Others are mentioned by Pearson.

a little diversity in their phraseology and number in the earliest forms in which they appear.

Thus in the article relating to the church, the most antient Creeds have only the words "holy church," the word "catholic" having been added by the Greeks.¹ And, what is more worthy of remark, the article of the "communion of saints" is not to be found in any Creed or baptismal confession of the first four centuries, nor in many of those of a subsequent date. Its earliest occurrence, perhaps, is in the 115th and 181st of the *Sermones de Tempore* erroneously ascribed to Augustine.

It is maintained,

4. That the Creeds of the primitive church were derived originally from the holy Scriptures.

In proof of this I will point out, first some internal indications of the earliest Creeds having been derived from Scripture.

Thus, in the first creed given above from Irenæus, in addition to the fact observable at a glance, that the whole tone of the phraseology is remarkably scriptural, we have in one part a direct quotation from Phil. ii. 10, 11. The way in which it is made also, without acknowledgment, seems an additional proof how completely Scripture was the guide throughout, if indeed, any other than the general phraseology were wanting. I sub-join the original below, with one or two references to Scripture in illustration of the scriptural nature of the phraseology, and the language may in other parts, as any reader conversant with the Greek Testament will see, be easily traced to the same source.²

¹ See Pearson in loc.

² Ἡ μὲν γὰρ Ἐκκλησία, καθὼς καὶ ὅλης τῆς οἰκουμένης ἕως πρῶτον τῆς γῆς διασπαρμένη, παρα δὲ τῶν Ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν ἐκείνῳ μετῴντων παραλαβούσα τὴν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς πάντοτε καὶ πανταχοῦ τὴν τιτύμενόν τὴν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὰς θαλάσσας, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς, [See Acts iv. 24; xiv. 15.] πιστὴ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, [See 1 Cor. viii. 6, which reference I give on the authority of the following passage in Rufinus. "Orientis Ecclesiæ omnes ita tradunt, 'Credo in unum Deum Patrem omnipotentem;' et rursus in sequenti sermone, ubi nos dicimus, 'Et in Jesum Christum, unicum Filium ejus, Dominum Nostrum,' illi tradunt, 'Et in unum Dominum Nostrum Jesum Christum, Filium ejus.' Unum scilicet Deum et unum Dominum, secundum auctoritatem Pauli Apostoli profitentis." Ruf. in Symb. § 4. and see § 11. A remarkable observation this for one who tells us elsewhere that the Apostles drew up the Creed.] τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, τοῦ σεσαρκέντου ὑπὸ τῆς ἡμετέρας σωτηρίας καὶ ἐκ Πνεύματος ἁγίου, τοῦ διὰ τῶν προφητῶν καθηρῶς τὰς προφητείας, καὶ τὰς ἐλπίδας, καὶ τὴν ἐκ παλαιῶν χρόνων, καὶ τοῦ παθός, καὶ τῆς γάρτης ἐκ νεκρῶν, καὶ τῆς ὑπάρξεως ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀναλήψῃ τοῦ ἡσυχώσαντο Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν, καὶ τῆν ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ Πατρὸς [Matt. xvi. 27; Mark viii. 38.] παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ, ἐπὶ τὸ ἀνακαταλίσσασθαι τὰ πάντα, [Eph. i. 10.] καὶ ἀναστήσῃ πάσαι σαρκὶ πάσης ἀνθρωπότητος, ἵνα Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦ τῶν Κυρίων ἡμῶν, καὶ Θεοῦ, καὶ σωτῆρος, καὶ βασιλεῦς, κατὰ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Πατρὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος, πᾶσι γού καμψῇ στυγαίαν καὶ ἐσθρανίαν καὶ καταχθινίαν, καὶ πάσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται αὐτῷ, [Phil. ii. 10, 11.] καὶ κλῆσι δικαίαν ἐν τοῖς πᾶσι πάντων τὰ μὴ πνευματικὰ τῆς πομπῆς, καὶ ἀγγέλους παραβάλλοντας, καὶ ἐν ἀποστασίᾳ ζῶντας, καὶ τοὺς αἰσίων καὶ αἰώνων καὶ ἀορίστου, καὶ βλασφημίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐς τὸ αἰῶνα πᾶν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν δικαίᾳ, καὶ ὁσίᾳ, καὶ τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ τητοῦσιν, καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ αὐτοῦ διαμνησκόμενοι, τοῖς ἀπ'

Again, in the third of the Creeds quoted above from Tertullian, we have two manifest quotations from scripture. "There is also," it runs, "a Son of that one God, namely *his Word*, who proceeded from him, *by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made.*" In the beginning," says St. John in his Gospel, "was *the Word*, and the Word was with God, &c.; *by him all things were made, and without him was nothing made that was made.*" (John i. 1, 3.)¹

Again, in those words, "that he suffered and was dead and buried, according to the Scriptures, and raised again by the Father," it is evident from other passages of the Treatise where this Creed occurs, that there is an allusion to 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.²

And this is particularly observable in the formula we are now considering, because it is of this that Tertullian says that it had come down from the beginning of the Gospel, for it clearly shows that it is of the faith itself delivered in it that he is speaking as having been the rule of belief from the beginning, and not of the particular form or summary he is delivering, and that for a description of that faith he went to Scripture.

Proceeding to the Creed given us by Origen, we find similar indications of the source whence it was derived. Besides several passages in the body of it, showing from the phraseology, (as it appears to me,) that the author had Scripture in his eye as his guide,³ there is one direct quotation from Scripture, namely in these words, "Who after he had administered to the Father in the creation of all things, for *by him all things were made*, in the last times humbling himself" &c., referring to John i. 3.⁴

As it respects the Creed of Lucian the martyr, there can be no doubt of the way in which it was drawn up, as it not only *professes* throughout to be derived from Scripture, but refers to the Scripture as the alone rule of faith, *the alone source* from

αρχῆς, τοῖς δὲ ἐκ μετανοίας, ζῶντι χαριτωμένῳ ἀναστὰς θάρσυνται, καὶ δοξάζουσιν πάντοτε. IREN. Adv. Hær. lib. i. c. 10. ed. Mass. c. 2, Ed. Grabe.

¹ "Filius Sermo ipsius, qui ex ipso processerit, per quem omnia facta sunt et sine quo factum est nihil." Tertull. 'Ο Λόγος . . . Πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν. (John i. 1, 3.)

² "Hunc passum, hunc mortuum et sepultum secundum Scripturas et resuscitatum a Patre."

³ Adv. Prax. c. 29. Also c. 15, of the same Treatise, where it is said, "quem mortuum contestatur, [i. e. Paulus,] secundum Scripturas."

⁴ The loss of the original Greek renders the similarity probably less striking, but the reader may compare the following, "Sicut per prophetas suos ante promiserat." Acts iii. 18. "Misit Dominum Nostrum Jesum Christum primo quidem vocaturum Israel." (Acts iii. 26.) "Ante omnem creaturam natus" (Col. i. 15.) "se ipsum exinanienti." (Phil. ii. 7.)

⁵ Qui quum in omnium conditione Patris ministrasset, per ipsum enim omnia facta sunt, novissimis temporibus se ipsum, &c.

which the faith was to be derived, and upon the authority of which it rested, and that not only as it respected the Church *as a body*, but as it respected individuals in it, for this, be it remembered, is a creed drawn up by an individual, and collected out of the Scriptures.

From an inspection, then, of these, the earliest Creeds that remain to us, I think we may fairly conclude that the early church went to the Scripture as the source from which to form their "Creed."

I do not, however, rest this conclusion upon such evidence alone, but upon direct testimony in favour of it, such as appears to me tolerably decisive.

In the first place, Irenæus, when speaking of the misquotations of Scripture by which the Valentinians supported their errors, observes, that "he who retains the rule of truth immovable which he received in baptism, will recognize the words, and phrases, and parables (referred to by the Valentinians) as derived from the Scriptures, but will not recognize the blasphemous hypothesis as so derived."¹ Consequently, "the rule of truth" received at baptism, was either Scripture itself or a confession derived from Scripture; and immediately after this passage follows the Creed or confession we have just referred to as given by Irenæus, and which by all authors whom I have yet seen is considered to be the "rule of truth" previously spoken of.²

Further, Cyril of Jerusalem, speaking of the Creed of his church, writes thus,—*"For since not all are able to read the Scriptures, but some are prevented by want of learning, others by want of leisure, from obtaining a knowledge of them, that the soul may not perish through ignorance, we comprehend the whole doctrine of the faith in a few sentences And at a proper time obtain from the divine Scriptures the proof for each one of the articles contained therein, for the articles of the faith were not, as it seems, composed by men, but the most suitable passages having been collected together out of the whole Scripture, furnish one exposition of the faith."*³

¹ IREN. Adv. her. lib. i. c. l. sub fin.

² To my mind, however, the context seems rather to show that the "rule of truth" was Scripture itself, for I see not how the "words and phrases and parables" quoted by the Valentinians from Scripture could be recognized through the medium of any brief confession of faith; in which case of course the argument from this passage for the scriptural origin of the Creed falls to the ground; but the passage becomes still more important in another point of view.

³ Επειδή γὰρ οὐ πάντες δύναται τὰς γραφὰς ἀναγνώσκειν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς μὴ διότι τὰ τοὺς θεοσχετοὺς τὰς ἐκκλησίαις πρὸς τὴν γνῶσιν, ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ τῇ ψυχῇ ἐξ ἀμαθίας ἀπολασθῆναι, οὐ λόγους

This testimony is clear and explicit, and coming from such a quarter as it does, is upon such a point of no little weight. Nor does it stand alone.

In the Latin Church we have first the testimony of Augustine. "This," he says, "is the Creed which ye are about to recite and deliver. Those words which ye have heard are *scattered throughout the divine Scriptures*, but *collected thence* and put together, that the memory of men of slow understanding might not fail, so that every one might be able to say and retain in his mind what he believes."¹

Again, in one of the homilies attributed to Eusebius, a French bishop, and by others to Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons, (both of whom flourished in the early part of the fifth century,) we have the same testimony. "The Fathers of the churches," he says, "anxious for the salvation of the people, *collected together out of the different books of Scripture* weighty testimonies to the truths of religion. Providing, therefore, a wholesome feast for the food of souls, they collected together words few and definite, brief in phrase but containing many mysteries, and *this they called the Creed*."²

And that this opinion as to the source from which "the Creed" was derived became common in the church, we may judge not only from the statement made by these authors being repeated in substance by others,³ but from the fact that some even of those

τοὺς στίχους τοῦ παν δόγμα τῆς πίστεως περιλαμβανόμενον . . . Ἐκδοῦν δι' ἀπὸ τοῦ δυνάμι καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν θείων γραφῶν πᾶσι ἰκανοῦ τῶν ἐγκρίσεων συστάσει. Οὐ γὰρ, ὡς εἰρήνη, ἀνθρώποις συνῆν ταῖς τῆς πίστεως, ἀλλ' ἐκ πάσης γραφῆς τὰ καίρια πάντα συλλέγοντα μίαν ἀνατλήσει τὴν τῆς πίστεως διδασκαλίαν. Cyrill. Hierosol. Cat. 5. ed. Milles. § 7. pp. 75, 6. (Ed. Paris. 1631. pp. 44, 5.)

¹ Hoc est symbolum quod recensuri estis et reddituri. Ista verba quæ audistis per divinas Scripturas sparsa sunt; sed inde collecta et ad unum redacta, ne tardorum hominum memoria laboraret; ut omnis homo possit dicere, possit tenere, quod credit. Aug. De Symb. Ad. Catech. c. i. Op. ed. Bened. tom. vi. col. 547.

² "Ecclesiarum patres de populorum salute solliciti, ex diversis voluminibus Scripturarum collegerunt testimonia divinis grava sacramentis. Disponentes itaque ad animarum pastum salubre convivium collegerunt verba brevia et certa, expedita sententiis sed diffusa mysteriis, et hoc symbolum nominaverunt." And a little after,— "Ecclesiarum magistri, studiosissimi salutis nostræ negotiatores, in Scripturis Sanctis de magnis maxima separaverunt mentium in pagina inscribenda, ut cuilibet cordi, quamlibet angusto, quamlibet rustico, sine ullius difficultatis impedimento facile insinuari possit veritatis agnitio." Euseb. Gallic. De symb. homil. prim. Biblioth. Patrum. Col. Agripp. 1618. tom. v. p. 1. p. 552.

³ Thus Thomas Aquinas, in reply to the difficulty,— "Videtur quod inconvenienter articuli fidei in symbolo ponantur; sacra enim scriptura est regula fidei cui nec addere nec subtrahere licet. . . . ergo illicitum fuit aliquod symbolum constituere quasi regulam fidei post sacram Scripturam editam"—says—"Veritas fidei in sacra Scriptura diffuse continetur, et variis modis, et in quibusdam obacure, ita quod ad eliciendum fidei veritatem ex sacra scriptura requiritur longum studium et exercitium, ad quod non possunt pervenire omnes illi quibus

writers who speak of the Creed as if it had been composed by the Apostles, tell us that it was collected by them from the Scriptures,¹ a notion which no doubt is sufficiently absurd, but which shows how general was the belief that it was derived from the Scriptures.

Upon the whole, then, there can, I think, be little doubt how this summary of the faith was formed, and whence it was collected.

It is maintained therefore,—

5. That none of the antient Creeds can be considered as an apostolical production.

The truth of this follows immediately from the proof of the foregoing positions. Neither as a form of words nor as a summary of the faith is any one of them entitled to be considered as of apostolical origin. That the orthodox Creeds, as conveying the faith delivered by the apostles, may all, in a sense, be said to be of apostolical origin, especially as derived from the writings of the apostles, is quite true, but this is all which can be justly claimed for any of them in respect of *apostolicity*.

This view of the history of the antient Creeds may enable us to judge of the accuracy of Mr. Newman's observations on the subject, in his ninth and tenth Lectures. His object is to find out an authoritative digest of the essentials of the Gospel. This he thinks is supplied by "the Creed," and to clothe it with full authority, he resolutely maintains that this digest was made by the apostles, and as it is convenient to include all the Articles of all the orthodox Creeds down to the Constantinopolitan (commonly called the Nicene) Creed, so we are somehow or other to suppose that they are all identical, though, as might be imagined, there are some contradictory statements upon this latter point; and having thus jumbled the formulæ of four centuries and all churches together, with all their discrepancies, (treating even the Creeds of Irenæus and Tertullian as identical with the Constantinopolitan) and speaking of them all as one *formulu*, he adds, "I say, then, that *the Creed* is a collection of DEFINITE ARTICLES SET APART FROM THE FIRST, passing from hand to hand," &c. (p. 296.) And these "definite articles" are the essentials of the

necessarium est cognoscere fidei veritatem; quorum plerique aliis negotiis occupati studio vacare non possunt: et ideo fuit necessarium ut ex sententiis sacræ Scripturæ aliquid manifestum summarie colligeretur, quod proponeretur omnibus ad credendum, quod quidem non est additum sacræ Scripturæ, sed potius ex sacræ Scripturæ sumptum."—See Sec. q. 1, art. 9. See also Durand. in 3. dist. 25, q. 2.

"De totis scripturis hæc brevium collecta sunt ab apostolis, ut, quoniam plures credentium literas nesciunt, vel qui sciunt præ occupatione sæculi scripturas legere non possunt, hæc corde retinentes, habeant sufficientem sibi scientiam salutarem." Rab. Maur. De instit. cleric. lib. 2. c. 56. See also Paschasius Rabertus De Spir. S. in præf. quoted by Vossius, De tribus Symb. pp. 4, 5.

Gospel, the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. Thus, after having spoken of the Apostles' Creed, the Creeds of Irenæus and Tertullian, and that found in the Apostolical Constitutions, he adds, *speaking of them all*,—"We find it [i. e. the Creed] *digested in form, limited in its topics, circumscribed in its range, one and the same everywhere*," (p. 265); and still more explicitly, "Irenæus, Tertullian, and the rest, cite *the Apostles' Creed*, and say, 'this is the faith which makes a Christian, the essentials of revelation, the great truths of the Gospel,'" &c. (p. 267.) And so, though the doctrine of baptism is not alluded to in the Apostles' Creed, yet because it is contained in the form agreed upon at the Council of Constantinople, (and elsewhere,) it is said that in "*the Creed*" "the doctrine of baptism is expressed in an article," (p. 266,) and the variations are treated as mere "varieties in the detail," not "interfering with the substantial identity," so that "we must consider the Nicene and the Apostles' Creed as identical." (pp. 270, 271.)

Now that the orthodox Creeds all contained, *as far as they extended*, the same faith, and were so far apostolical and identical, is most true, but that they are identical as formulæ, or as collections of certain definite articles, as Mr. Newman has intimated, and which alone would answer his purpose, or that the articles of which they are composed were "set apart from the first," is manifestly and on the face of it a mistake; as the preceding historical notices of the facts of the case have fully shown.

Before concluding this chapter, however, I would offer a few remarks upon the notion here advocated by Mr. Newman, (which is also supported by Mr. Keble,) that "the Creed" is a selection of the fundamental articles of the faith; and also consider what we are to understand by the name "rule of faith," applied by the early Fathers to the Creeds which they delivered.

Mr. Newman says that "the Creed" is "the abstract of saving faith," (p. 286,) and holds language respecting it implying that it is a selection of the fundamental points of the Christian faith. The same appears to be Mr. Keble's view of it.

Now this language seems to me to require (to say the least) considerable modification, and to be calculated as used by these authors to lead to very erroneous views of the matter. There is, I believe, a sense in which it may be said that the Apostles' Creed contains the elements of the Christian faith in the fundamental points. But that it contains all the fundamental points, or is exclusively an abstract of these particular points, cannot I conceive be maintained.

If we were to judge by the Creeds of Irenæus and Tertullian, and the testimony of the early Fathers, as above quoted, we must suppose that the fundamental faith was limited to points connec-

ted with the nature and acts of the Three Persons of the Godhead.¹ Indeed we are told by Tertullian and Athanasius, as we have seen, that the whole faith is founded upon and may be summed up in an orthodox confession relating to the Three Divine Persons. And to the passages there quoted many others might be added to the same effect.

Thus Basil says, "For baptism is the seal of faith, and faith is a belief in the Godhead."²

And as an orthodox belief in Christ includes a belief in the whole Trinity, so the Christian's faith is sometimes spoken of (as in Scripture) as included in a belief in Christ. "God," says Hilary, "does not call us to the life of happiness by means of points difficult to be understood, nor allure us by a multiplied kind of flowing eloquence. Eternity is placed perfectly and easily within our reach. We are to believe that Jesus was even raised from the dead by God, and confess him to be the Lord."³

Thus also speaks Augustine;—"When therefore it is inquired what is to be believed which pertains to religion it is sufficient for a Christian to believe that the cause of things created, heavenly or earthly, visible or invisible, is nothing else but the goodness of the Creator, who is the one and true God, and that there is no nature which is not either God himself or from him; and that he is a Trinity, namely, a Father, and a Son begotten of the Father, and a Holy Spirit proceeding from that same Father, but one and the same Spirit of the Father and the Son."⁴

There is also a remarkably clear passage in the Exposition of the Creed by Rufinus upon this point. "From all these things," he says, "let the faithful turn away his ears: and let him adhere to the holy church, *which confesses* God the Father Almighty, and his only begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, of a concordant and consonant kind of substance, and *believes* that the Son of God was born of a virgin, and suffered for

¹ Neither the articles of the church, the communion of saints, nor baptism, are noticed in the Creeds of Irenæus and Tertullian, nor in the selection of "necessary articles" given above from Cyril of Jerusalem.

² Εἶσι γὰρ τὸ βάπτισμα σφραγὶς τῆς πίστεως, ἡ δὲ πίστις θεοῦτος σφραγισμένη. Adv. Eunom. lib. iii. § 5. ed. Bened. tom. i. p. 276. (Par. 1618. tom. ii. p. 84.)

³ Non per difficiles nos Deus ad beatam vitam questionibus vocat, nec multiplici eloquentis facundis genere sollicitat. In absoluto nobis ac facili est eternitas; Jesum et suscitatum a mortuis per Deum credere et ipsum esse Dominum confiteri. Hilar. De Trinit. lib. 10, sub. fin. ed. Bened. col. 1080.

⁴ Cum ergo queritur quid credendum sit quod ad religionem pertineat . . . Satis est Christiano rerum creaturarum causam sive celestium sive terrestrium sive visibilium sive invisibilium non nisi bonitatem credere Creatoris, qui est Deus unus et verus, nullamque esse naturam quæ non aut ipse sit aut ab ipso; eumque esse Trinitatem, Patrem scilicet et Filium a Patre genitum et Spiritum Sanctum ab eodem Patre procedentem, sed unum eundemque Spiritum Patris et Filii. Enchirid. ad Laur. c. 9. vi. 198.

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the salvation of man, and rose from the dead in the same flesh in which he was born, and trusts that the same will come as the judge of all; *in which* [church] both the remission of sins and the resurrection of the flesh is preached."¹ The reader will observe the distinction here made between the *fundamental* faith of the church, and the *privileges* promised by the ministers of the church to that faith; and that the *fundamental* faith is a belief in the Father, Son, and Spirit, in their revealed nature and acts.

A still more remarkable passage occurs in the Acts of the Council of Nice. A philosopher disputing with the bishops and others at Nice, previous to the meeting of the Council, was encountered by an aged and unlearned confessor, not with argument, but with a simple declaration of "the doctrines of the truth,"² which he gave in the following words,—“There is one God who, having made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and having formed man out of the earth, sustained all things by his Word and Holy Spirit. This Word, O philosopher, knowing him to be the Son of God, we adore, believing that for our redemption he took flesh of a Virgin, and was born and made man; and that by the sufferings of his flesh upon the cross, and his death, he rescued us from eternal condemnation, and by his resurrection obtained for us eternal life; who, having returned to heaven, will, we expect, come again, and be judge of all those things which we have done.”

The philosopher, upon being asked by the confessor whether he believed these things, replied in the affirmative; upon which “the old man said to him, If thou believest that these things are so, arise, follow me, let us hasten to the church, in which thou mayest receive the seal of this faith;” and the philosopher arose, followed him, and was “baptized and united to the church of God,” and “the Synod rejoiced at the wonderful works of God.”³

We have here, then, a clear proof that the essentials of the baptismal Creed were, even at the period of the Council of Nice, considered to be comprised in an orthodox confession respecting the Sacred Trinity.

Judging from these passages, we should conclude that the early church considered that in a full and orthodox belief in the nature

¹ “Ab his, inquam, omnibus fidelis declinet auditus; sanctam vero *Ecclesiam* teneat, quæ Deum Patrem omnipotentem et unigenitum filium ejus Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum et Spiritum Sanctum concordi et consona substantiæ ratione profitetur, filiumque Dei natum ex virgine et passum pro salute humana, et resurrexisse a mortuis in eadem carne qua natus est, *credit*, eundemque venturum judicem omnium sperat, *in qua* et remissio peccatorum et carnis resurrectio *prædicatur*.” Expos. in Symb. art. “Sanctam Ecclesiam.”

² Та тѣхъ вѣрныхъ догматъ.

³ Gelas. Cyzic. Acts. Conc. Nic. Part. 2. c. 13. pp. 90—93. ed. 1599. The same account is given by Sozomen, Hist. Eccl. i. 17.

and acts of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as represented to us by Divine revelation, was included a belief in all the essentials of Christian doctrine.

Now if this is the case, (upon which question, however, I shall not here enter,) the Apostolical, Nicene, or Constantinopolitan Creed, would be, in one sense, too long to be called a selection of the fundamental points, for they embrace points not connected with articles relating to any of the Persons of the Sacred Trinity.

But it will be admitted by all, that whether these points are fundamental or not, all essentially important points connected with the orthodox doctrine relating to the Three Persons of the Sacred Trinity, are fundamental, and consequently that these Creeds are too short to be called a selection of the fundamental articles, for they do not contain all those points. They need to be greatly expanded to answer that character, and a wide field for amplification is opened on many important points. Who will undertake to enumerate all the heretical notions that might be connected with, and vitiate, a professed belief in Christ? Now, as many heretical notions as there are that *might* be entertained respecting his person and work, so many fundamental points are there connected with this article alone. And the Creed appears to have been gradually expanded as heresies arose in the church, and expanded only as those heresies might seem to render it necessary. As, for instance, the Arian heresy was the occasion of the insertion of the article of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father; and this article, though fundamental, was not expressed in the Creed till that time, and consequently all the fundamental articles were not previously expressed in the Creed; and as this fundamental article was not there for some centuries, so are there others, equally fundamental, that have never been inserted.

True, this article, as well as that of the descent into hell, is supposed to have been always implied, though not always expressed, and doubtless it was implied in an orthodox belief respecting the Son. And so also may other articles be said to be equally implied, though circumstances did not seem to the early church to require a further amplification of the Creed by the enumeration of other points; as, for instance, the doctrine of justification, and others. But the question is not whether a person of orthodox belief would carry out the meaning of the Creed so as to include all the fundamental articles of the faith, for this such a person would do in the case of a much shorter confession; but whether the Creed *gives expression* to all the fundamental points of the faith, so that either in words, or by virtue of *direct and necessary inference*, they are all to be found there.

Moreover, when we come to draw out the points included in

it, may not some be fundamental, and others not? So that not only is there no easily ascertainable limit to the points included, but further direction is needed for the classification of those points, and the determining which are fundamental, and which not. Hence there may be many fundamental points not mentioned in the Creed, and there *may be* some in the Creed (as, for instance, the article of the descent into hell) which are not absolutely fundamental.

There is no reason, indeed, to suppose, that the early churches ever considered their Creed to be any more a selection of the fundamental points than the words of our Lord, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, upon which it was founded; and they certainly had no authority to *determine* what they were, if they had attempted to do so.¹

How far Mr. Newman feels the weight of these difficulties to press upon his hypothesis, may be judged by the following extract from his work:—"How much, then, or how little, doctrine is contained in the Creed? What extent and exactness of meaning must be admitted in its articles by those who profess it? What, in fact, after all, is that faith which is required of the candidates for baptism, since it is not to be an acceptance of the mere letter of the Creed, but of a real and living doctrine? For instance, is the doctrine of original sin to be accounted part of the Creed? or of justification by faith? or of election? or of the sacraments? If so, is there any limit to that faith which the Creed represents? *I answer, there is no precise limit.*" (p. 303.)

Surely, then, it is a mistake to say, as Mr. Newman does, that "the fundamental or essential doctrines are those which are contained in the Creed," (p. 259); as if the Creed was a selection of the fundamentals of the faith.

Putting aside, then, the question whether the articles added in the Apostolical, Nicene, and Constantinopolitan forms, beyond those relating to the Sacred Trinity, are fundamental or not, it does not appear that those Creeds are a selection of the fundamental points, even as far as the confession relating to the Trinity is concerned, but only an orthodox amplification, as far as they go, of the Christian faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, giving expression particularly to some points which had been misrepresented by prevailing heresies. All that could be said of

¹ "The judgment of the primitive churches is no doubt of great use and weight . . . But still, since their judgment must finally be submitted to the test of *Scripture and right reason*, and cannot be admitted but as consonant thereto, it is very plain that the ratio of a fundamental rests not ultimately in their judgment or definition, but in the nature of the doctrine itself, and the credentials which it brings with it, by which all the rest must be tried. The definition, therefore, even of the primitive churches, can never be justly looked upon as the proper or adequate rule." Waterland, *Disc. of Fundam.* (Works, viii. 106.)

any of these Creeds in this respect is, that it gives the principal articles of the Christian faith, and contains the rudimental elements of the whole faith,¹ and may thus be called a summary of the Christian faith, as all the vital points of the faith may be connected with, and made to enter into, the right interpretation of its articles;² but then this leaves the question of what are the fundamentals of the faith, the essentials of the gospel, almost as much open as ever.

Moreover, we must ask our opponents, if one of these Creeds is to be taken as a precise list of the fundamental articles, which of them it is; for to talk of a Creed which takes not the slightest notice of the articles, for instance, of the church and the communion of saints, as being *identical* with another which contains them, is manifestly absurd. And when they have pointed it out, they will only have involved themselves in a fresh difficulty, by being left to give a reason for the omissions or additions in the others; for their position is, that what was given in each of those Creeds was given as representing *the* fundamental articles of the faith. And to endeavour to escape from this difficulty, by declaring that they are all identical, is an attempt which none but those wedded to a hypothesis could ever have made.

Without entering, then, here into the question, what in particular are the fundamental articles of the faith, certain it is, that "the Creed" is not a selection or representation of them;³ except in the sense in which it may be said that belief in Christ is the only fundamental article, or that our Lord's words, Matt. xxviii. 19, comprise the whole fundamental faith; in which sense, of course, the appellation is not worth disputing about to either party.

Moreover, since "the Creed" is proposed to us apparently as the interpreter of Scripture, to teach us the fundamentals of the faith, we may take this opportunity of asking in what point the language of "the Creed," take which you please, is clearer than that of the Scripture. Those who are so inclined, can make heresy harmonize with the one as easily as with the other. Nay, St. Augustine says, "So also it may happen that a catholic catechumen may light upon some heretic's book, and, unable to discern error from truth, may believe something contrary to the catholic faith, *which error, nevertheless, the words of the Creed*

¹ As the Apostles' Creed is spoken of by Ruffinus as containing "*prima fidei elementa.*" Expos. in Symb. art. "Crucifixus," &c.

² Thus it is said in the "*Reformatio legum eccles.*" of the Apostolical, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, "*ista tria symbola ut fidei nostrę compendia quędam recipimus et amplectimur.*" (Tit. l. c. 5.)

³ On the question, what are the fundamental articles of the faith, the reader may see Waterland, Stapfer, Spanheim, &c.

do not oppose ; for, under the same words, innumerable errors of heretics have arisen."¹ Nay more, the Socinians themselves have contended for the apostolical origin of the Apostles' Creed, and argued from it that the Apostles did not hold the divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost, because they have not there (as they maintain) expressly taught it.²

The antiient Creeds, then, (to proceed to the second point on which we proposed to offer a few remarks,) being thus brief summaries of the chief articles of the Christian faith, were justly called by the Fathers *the rule of faith*. Even the Creeds given by Irenæus and Tertullian are called so, as containing the prime articles of the faith, in the right explication of which, in full meaning and consequences, all the vital articles might be included. They were so called as expositions of the faith publicly professed on the chief points in the primitive churches, just as the symbolical books of the Church of England, the Lutheran Church, &c., form the rule of faith to those churches respectively, (the Lutheran being called the *Normal* books³), differing only in the *degree*, not in the *nature*, of their claim upon us ; their degree of claim upon us being greater from their being sanctioned by the primitive catholic church, while the *nature* of their claim is the same, i. e. of a secondary and entirely subordinate character, depending upon their conformity to the Divine will, to be judged of by us by their conformity to that revelation of the Divine will which we possess in the inspired Scriptures. And hence the Creed is sometimes called by Augustine the "*confession*" of faith.⁴

¹ Sic etiam fieri potest ut in alicujus hæretici librum catholicus catechumenus incidat, et a veritate nesciens discernere errorem credat aliquid contra catholicam fidem, cui tamen errori verba symboli non repugnant, sub iisdem quippe verbis innumerales hæreticorum errores, exorti sunt. De Bapt. contr. Donat. lib. 3. c. 15. ix. 115.

² Bishop Stillingfleet's Vindic. of Doctrine of Trinity, p. 224.

³ "Veteres symbola etiam *norma, ætiam tæ norma; regulam fidei* vocabant, quemadmodum et apud nos interdum *librorum normalium* nomine veniunt."—"Pro norma quadam ac regula fidei sed *secundaria* habeantur [i. e. libri symbolici] quæ vim omnem atque auctoritatem a convenientia cum Scriptura sacra accipiat . . . Atque ita quoque accipiendum quando libri symbolici in quibusdam locis *normales* adpellantur." Budd. Isag. in Theolog. vol. i. p. 395. and p. 476.

⁴ "Hoc nisi credamus, periclitatur ipsum nostræ *Confessionis* initium, quæ nos in Deum Patrem omnipotentem credere confitemur." Enchirid. ad Laurentium de fide, &c. c. 94. tom. vi. col. 331.

CHAPTER V.

THAT PATRISTICAL TRADITION IS NOT A "PRACTICALLY INFALLIBLE" WITNESS OF THE ORAL TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES NOR RECEIVABLE AS A DIVINE INFORMANT.

SECTION I.—PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

WE now proceed to a consideration of the five points in which, as we have already observed, (pp. 40, 1,) the doctrine of our opponents upon this subject is contained; and we shall in this chapter endeavour to prove, in opposition to the *first*, that patristical tradition is not a "practically infallible" reporter of the oral teaching of the apostles, nor receivable as a divine informant.

This question lies at the root of the whole controversy, and a proof of what we here maintain cuts away the ground altogether from under the feet of our opponents, and leaves them without any foundation to rest upon. It demands, therefore, a full and attentive consideration.

When our opponents refer to patristical tradition as a divine informant, they are not to be understood as attributing any authority to the Fathers in themselves as individuals, but only as witnesses of what they had received from others; and the patristical tradition which they regard as a divine informant is not (i. e. in *theory*) that which is delivered by one or two Fathers, but that which is delivered by the consentient testimony of all the Fathers; which they dignify by the name of "catholic consent," and it is to this "catholic consent" alone that *in theory* they attach the notion of a divine informant.

The practical rule for ascertaining this "catholic consent" is taken¹ by them from Vincent, a monk of Lerins, who lived in the

¹ See Newman's *Lectures*, p. 63, and Keble's *Sermon*, pp. 32, 3, &c.

fifth century, by whom it is thus delivered. I quote from the translation lately published at Oxford under the sanction of our opponents.

"We are to take great care," he tells us, "that we hold that which hath been believed every where always and of all men; for that is truly and properly catholic (as the very force and nature of the word doth declare) which comprehendeth all things in general after an universal manner, and that shall we do if we follow universality, antiquity, consent. Universality shall we follow thus, if we profess that one faith to be true which the whole church throughout the world acknowledgeth and confesseth. Antiquity shall we follow, if we depart not any whit from those senses which it is plain that our holy elders and fathers generally held. Consent shall we likewise follow, if in this very antiquity itself we hold the definitions and opinions of all, or at any rate almost all, the priests and doctors together. What then shall a catholic Christian do, if some small part of the church cut itself off from the communion of the universal faith? What else but prefer the health of the whole body before the pestiferous and corrupt member? What if some new infection goeth about to corrupt not in this case only a little part but the whole church? Then likewise shall he regard and be sure to cleave unto antiquity, which can now no more be seduced by any crafty novelty. What if in antiquity itself, and amongst the antient Fathers, be found some error of two or three men, or haply of some one city or province? Then shall he diligently take heed that he prefer the universal decrees and determinations of an antient General Council, if such there be, before the temerity or folly of a few. What if some such case happen where no such thing can be found? Then shall he labour, by conferring and laying them together amongst themselves, to refer to and consult the antient Fathers' opinions, not of all, but of those only which living at divers times and sundry places, yet continuing in the communion and faith of one catholic church, were approved masters and guides to be followed (*magistri probabiles*); and whatsoever he perceiveth not one or two but all jointly with one consent, plainly, usually, constantly to have holden, written, and taught, let him know that this without scruple or doubt he ought to believe." (cc. 2, 3.)

Such is the rule to which our opponents refer us for ascertaining "catholic consent."

To guard against misapprehension, I would at once premise, that to these observations, taking them generally and as pointing out a useful practical guide in the interpretation of Scripture, I am far from offering any objection, and *as such* they have been quoted by many divines of our church. I am quite ready to ad-

mit, nay, I would firmly maintain, that the concurrent testimony of many of the great lights of the primitive church in favour of any particular interpretation of Scripture in a *fundamental* point is the strongest possible confirmation of the truth of that interpretation, and the opposition of any view on a *fundamental* point to the sentiments of *all* the Fathers that remain to us, is of itself a good reason for its rejection.

But this is a view of the matter totally different to that taken by our opponents. With them all which stands the test of this rule is to be considered "catholic consent," and as such a divine informant, and is consequently binding upon the conscience as a matter which demands our faith. How far Vincent himself agreed with our opponents in this we shall consider hereafter, when reviewing the sentiments of the Fathers on this subject.

Now it is evident, in the first place, that this rule, in its practical application, must be subject to many restrictions and limitations; and accordingly we find that in the latter part of the treatise Vincent himself admits as much. Nay, he makes an important restriction (to which our opponents have paid little attention) as to the *subjects* respecting which this patristical tradition is to be *inquired into*. For he tells us that "this antient consent of holy Fathers is not so carefully and diligently to be both sought for and followed in every small question of the divine Law, but only, or, at least especially, in *the rule of faith*." (c. 28.) And again,—“It is necessary that the interpretation of the heavenly Scripture be directed according to the rule of the church's understanding: only be it observed, especially in those questions upon which *the foundations* of the whole catholic doctrine do depend.” (c. 29.)

Beyond *a few fundamental points*, then, he does not consider this antient consent much worth inquiring after.

Still further, even in these, when he descends to the description of the practical mode of finding this antient consent, he is of course driven to make various *restrictions and limitations* and at last to admit that this antient consent is in fact the consent of some dozen individuals who are taken as the representatives of some dozen millions.

‘Neither yet,’ he adds, “are heresies always nor all after this sort to be impugned, but *only such as are new and upstart*; to wit, at their first springing up and before they have (as hindered by the shortness of time) falsified the rules of the antient faith, and before that, the poison spreading further, they go about to corrupt the Fathers' writings; but those heresies which have already got ground, and be of some continuance, are not this way to be dealt withal; because by long tract of time they have had long opportunity to steal the truth. And therefore

such kind, whether of profane schisms or heresies, which be of longer standing, we must not otherwise convince but only, if need be, by the authority of the Scriptures; or else avoid and detest them as already convicted and condemned in old time by general councils of catholic priests. . . . But those Fathers' opinions only are to be conferred together, which with holiness, wisdom, and constancy, lived, taught, and continued in the faith and communion of the catholic church, and finally deserved either to die faithfully in Christ, or happily for Christ to be martyred: whom notwithstanding we are to believe with this *condition*, that whatsoever either all *or the greater part* with one and the same mind *plainly, commonly, and constantly*, as it were in a Council of Doctors agreeing together, have confirmed by *receiving it, holding it, and delivering it*; let that be accounted for undoubted, for certain and acknowledged truth. And whatsoever any, although holy and learned, although a bishop, although a confessor and martyr, hath holden otherwise than all or against all, let that be put aside from the authority of the common public and general judgment, and reputed among his own proper, private, and secret opinions, lest with the utmost danger of our eternal salvation, we do, according to the custom of sacrilegious heretics and schismatics, forsake the truth of the universal doctrine, and follow the novel error of some one man." (c. 28.)

And further on, recapitulating these means for determining the truth, he adds, "Lest any man might think that we said this rather of our own presumption than from any authority of the church, we give an example of the sacred Council holden almost three years since at Ephesus, a city in Asia, in the time of the right honourable consuls, Bessus and Antiochus, in which disputation being had of authorizing rules of faith, lest there might by chance some profane novelty creep in, as happened at that perfidious meeting in Ariminum, this was thought the most catholic, faithful, and best course to be taken, by all the priests there present, which were about two hundred in number, that the opinions of those holy Fathers should be brought forth, of whom it was certain that some of them had been martyrs, some confessors, and that all had lived and died catholic priests, that by their consent and verdict the true religion of antient doctrine might be duly and solemnly confirmed, and the blasphemy of profane novelty condemned: which being so done, that impious Nestorius was worthily and justly judged to have taught contrary to the old catholic faith, and blessed Cyril to have agreed with holy and sacred antiquity." And he then proceeds to give us the names of the Fathers according to whose judgment "the rule of divine doctrine" was established, which were, Peter, Athanasius, and Theophilus, Bishops of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazian-

zum, Basil of Cæsarea, and Gregory of Nyssa, Felix Martyr and Julius, Bishops of Rome, Cyprian of Carthage, and Ambrose of Milan, adding, "albeit a far greater number of Fathers might have been alleged, yet was it not necessary, because it was not fit that the time of business should be spent with multitude of witnesses; and further, no man doubted but that those ten did think little other than all the rest of their colleagues." (c. 30.)

Such is "*catholic consent*" at its very best. The testimony of ten witnesses, whose remarks upon a question not in their mind at the time will probably be more or less indirect, with an accommodating "&c." and an intimation that *no doubt* the rest *agreed* with them!

The fact is, that when we come to the practical application of the rule, we find ourselves beset with endless difficulties, and hence it was that Vincent himself was obliged to clog his rule with so many exceptions and limitations as to lead Bishop Stillingfleet (one of our opponents' best referees) to make the remark we have already quoted, that "wise men, who have thoroughly considered of Vincentius his way, though in general they cannot but approve of it so far as to think it highly improbable that there should be antiquity, universality, and consent, against the true and genuine sense of Scripture, yet when they consider this way of Vincentius, with all those cautions, restrictions and limitations set down by him, (l. 1, c. 39,) they are apt to think that he hath put men to a WILD-GOOSE CHASE *to find out any thing according to his rules*; and that St. Augustine spake a great deal more to the purpose, when he spake concerning *all the writers of the church*, 'that although they had never so much learning and sanctity, he did not think it true because they thought so, but because they persuaded him to believe it true, either from the authority of Scripture or some probable reason.'"¹

And so in another place he says, "The *utmost* use I can suppose, then, Vincentius his rules can be of to us now is in that case which he puts when corruptions and errors have had time to take root and fasten themselves, and that is, By an appeal to Scripture and Antient Councils. *But BECAUSE OF THE CHARGE OF INNOVATION* against us, we are content to be tried by his second rule, By the consent of the Fathers of greatest reputation, &c."²

The period over which the inquiry for this catholic consent is to extend, is left by our opponents altogether indefinite, but apparently it includes about the first five or perhaps six centuries.³

¹ Rational Account of Grounds of Protestant Religion, 1665, p. 279.

² Council of Trent examined, &c. p. 24.

³ See Newman's Lectures, pp. 241—9.

Mr. Newman seems contented with the first four, for he says, "If the voluminous remains of that era, including the works of Ambrose, Austin, Jerome, Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory Nyssen, Gregory Nazianzen, Athanasius, and Cyril of Jerusalem, will not afford a standard of catholic doctrine, there seems little profit to be gained from antiquity at all." (p. 246.)

A less period than this our opponents have already found (like the Romanists) would not at all answer their purpose. And they have practically confessed that their Creed depends for its patristical proof upon the writings of the fourth and fifth century. For thus writes the author of tract 85.

"In both cases, [i. e. "the canon of Scripture," and "the catholic doctrines,"] *"we believe mainly because the church of the fourth and fifth centuries unanimously believed."*—*"We depend for the canon and creed upon the fourth and fifth centuries. We depend upon them thus: as to Scripture, former centuries certainly do not speak distinctly, frequently, or unanimously, except of some chief books, as the Gospels; but still we see in them, as we believe, an evergrowing tendency and approximation to that full agreement which we find in the fifth. The testimony given at the latter date is the limit to which all that has been before given converges. For instance, it is commonly said, exceptio probat regulam; when we have reason to think that a writer or an age would have witnessed so, and so, BUT FOR THIS OR THAT, and that this or that were mere accidents of his position, then he or it may be said to tend towards such testimony. In this way the first centuries tend towards the fifth. Viewing the matter as one of moral evidence, we seem to see in the testimony of the fifth the very testimony which every preceding century gave ACCIDENTS EXCEPTED, such as the present loss of documents once extant or the then existing misconceptions which want of intercourse between the churches occasioned. The fifth century acts as a comment on the OBSCURE TEXT of the centuries before it, and brings out a meaning which with the help of the comment any candid person sees really to belong to them. And in the same way as regards the catholic creed, though there is not so much to explain and account for. Not so much, for no one, I suppose, will deny that in the Fathers of the FOURTH century, it is as fully developed and as unanimously adopted as it can be in the fifth."* (pp. 102, 3.)

Now as it respects the canon of Scripture I say nothing here, because this will form the subject of a future chapter, but as it respects what the Tractator calls "the catholic creed," this passage appears to me worthy of the reader's especial notice, as throwing very considerable light upon the true nature of "catholic consent," and the testimony of "every body, always, every

where." In the writings of the whole of the first three centuries, it seems, we get, not a proof of our opponents' version of "the catholic creed," but only something that *in their view tends towards it*, something which, *when we interpret it by the writings of the fourth and fifth centuries*, seems, ACCIDENTS EXCEPTED," to mean what the writings *which we have selected as the interpreter express*, though it must be admitted after all that it is but an "OBSCURE TEXT." So that if we were even to add the writings of the first three centuries to Scripture to obtain "the catholic creed," we should only get an obscure comment upon the obscure writings of the Apostles, and should not find what we wanted until we admitted the light of the fourth and fifth centuries to interpret the obscure comment upon those obscure writings. The Tractator, therefore, justly remarks, that "we," i. e. he and those who think with him, "believe mainly because the church of the fourth and fifth centuries unanimously believed," "we depend for the canon and *creed* upon the fourth and fifth centuries."

The reader will observe how completely this coincides with the ground taken by the Romanists. And in the following passage he will see what was the view taken of their conduct in this respect by one of the best of our opponents' own witnesses.

"I know," says Bishop Stillingfleet, "some of the greatest patrons of the Church of Rome, and such who know best how to manage things with best advantage for the interest of that church, have made little account of the three first ages, and confined themselves within the compass of the four first Councils, upon this pretence, because the books and writers are so rare before, and that those persons who lived then had no occasion to write of the matters in controversy between them and us. But if the ground why those other things which are not determined in Scripture are to be believed by us and practised as necessary, be, that they were *apostolical traditions, who can be more competent judges what was so, and what not, than those who lived nearest the apostolical times?* and those certainly, if they writ of any thing, could not write of any thing of more concernment to the Christian world than the knowledge of such things would be."¹

We might at once, then, on the ground of such admissions as these, demur to the doctrine of our opponents, and reply that these admissions are altogether fatal to their cause. For to claim for their creed the consent of every body, always, every where, in the catholic church, even such a universal consent as proves its apostolical origin, and makes that consent a divine informant

¹ Rational Account of Grounds of Protestant Religion, p. 263. ed. 1665.

or practically infallible reporter of the oral teaching of the Apostles, and then to admit that all the writings that remain to us of the first three centuries form but an *obscure text, tending only, even in their view*, towards the confirmation of their creed, and needing to be interpreted by the writings of the fourth and fifth centuries to make it really speak that creed, has so much in it of direct self-contradiction as to leave one, not in hesitation about the matter itself, but only wondering what can induce men to put forth such statements.

The purity of the motives by which the Tractators are influenced I call not in question. They are desirous of inducing men to embrace what they believe to be the truth, and therefore give the most high-sounding names to the testimony by which they think it is established, and hope thus to induce men to embrace it. Mr. Keble in particular reminds us how it would tend to "exempt us once and for ever from haunting doubts," if we would but be convinced "that the Nicene tradition is true and *divine*."¹ In a word, how comfortable it would be to come to the conclusion, no longer to give ourselves any trouble in deciding between the claims of conflicting doctrines, but pin our faith at once upon certain individuals.

And with many minds their scheme is suited to succeed. It exempts men from the trouble of thinking. It affects to place them under the direction of an infallible guide. It entangles them in the mazes of a magnificent vocabulary of words which delight, perplex, and ensnare them, and out of which they often neither wish nor are able to see their way. But they must excuse others if they look a little further into the nature of the testimony they adduce, and call things by their right names, and not suppose that any thing is gained by shutting their eyes to the real state of the case, and building their faith upon words instead of realities, upon claims to the consent of every body, always, every where, when upon investigation the "every body" turns out to be not one in a million, the "always" not one for every quarter of a century, and the "every where" not one for each country; to say nothing of the fact that there is hardly a doctrine respecting which we do not get conflicting testimonies.

But leaving the reader to judge how far these concessions of themselves overthrow their cause, I shall now proceed to point out the various grounds upon which we reject the notion of our opponents, that what they call "catholic consent," is a certain informant of the oral teaching of the Apostles.

¹ See p. 124.

SECTION II.—NO DEGREE OF CONSENT THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHICH IS
 ATTAINABLE WORTHY OF BEING CONSIDERED A DIVINE INFORMANT,
 OR CERTAIN WITNESS OF THE ORAL TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES.

The great argument upon which the system of our opponents is founded, is, that catholic *consent* in *the whole* primitive church for several centuries in favour of any doctrine or interpretation of Scripture or other point, is a sure proof that it was derived from the Apostles, for that otherwise such consent could not have been found in such a widely scattered body. Consentient patristical statements, they say, must have had a common origin in the teaching of the first preachers of Christianity.¹

This is the theory upon which their whole superstructure is built; and in words it is no doubt plausible enough, and sufficiently likely to captivate any man who will take words for realities. There is a natural anxiety to know something of the doctrines of the early church, and he who finds a few remains of the primitive doctors, almost naturally pleads for them as a sufficient testimony to demonstrate the primitive faith; just as a zealous antiquary, upon the testimony of a few relics accidentally turned up, will pronounce upon the state of the arts at the time when they were executed. What, moreover, could be more convenient and desirable, than to have such a standard of appeal for the termination of controversies, as the consentient testimony of the whole primitive church? It is quite refreshing and delightful, in the present state of the church, to contemplate the existence of such a court of appeal. The mind is at once attracted to the notion by a recollection of the benefits that might arise from it; for mark how the argument runs,—This or that is a doctrine or view which was held by *all the members of the whole church*, (*semper, ubique et ab omnibus*,) *everybody, always, everywhere*, for the first three or four centuries. What an overwhelming argument against a man who presumed to controvert it! But are you quite sure, he will say, that *everybody always everywhere* for the first three centuries did hold this view? The church was very widely spread during that period. Millions were included within it, and had but little intercourse with one another. You must have vast means of information. Are you quite sure that there were none who took an opposite view of the matter? Can you answer even for ten in every hundred? Yes, quite sure of

¹ There is also another ground on which Mr. Newman seems to claim for such consent the authority of a divine informant, namely, the promises made to the church, which are supposed to have secured infallibility to it, while it remained *one and undivided*. See Newman's Lectures; 8, pp. 224, &c. But without entering upon a discussion of the question here involved, our reply in the following work to the claim made for catholic consent, on the ground mentioned above, equally meets this case.

"everybody always everywhere," say our opponents ; so much so, as to have made this *universality of consent* the very groundwork upon which our claim for the *certainty* of the witness as a correct record of the oral teaching of the Apostles is founded. Well, then, there is no help for it, but that he who does not wish to unchristianize all the members of the catholic church who lived immediately after the times of the Apostles, must, if the point be an important one, accept what such a body of Christians unanimously held, as beyond controversy the truth of God. For it cannot be supposed that all the Christians of the first ages of the church were in error ; and therefore, what they all agreed in must be, in important points, that true faith which it is every good man's wish to embrace. For the true faith must in all ages be the same ; and therefore the belief of true Christians in all fundamental points must be the same now as in the first ages of Christianity. True catholic consent, then, might well conclude us, and though perhaps not altogether derived from apostolical tradition or teaching, would, as true, be identical with it.

And in this, but no other, sense did our learned Bishop Morley grant, in his Conference with the Jesuit, that the church was infallible. "If," said he, "by the word church were meant *all Christians in all places*, he would willingly grant that the church in that sense did never, nor could never, err in any point of faith or manners absolutely necessary to salvation."¹

And this might be granted for the present as much as for the antient church.

And it is remarkable that Bellarmine himself, when driven to an explanation of what is meant by the infallibility of the church, states it thus,—“The church cannot err, *that is*, that which *all* believers hold as of the faith, is necessarily true and of the faith,” respecting which there cannot be two opinions among those who suppose that there has always been a succession of individuals in the church holding the true faith. And when he adds,—“And likewise that which *all* bishops teach as belonging to the faith is necessarily true and of the faith,”² we should not, perhaps, think it worth while to raise much dispute on the abstract question.

So far we fully agree with our opponents. Only let them prove anything by Vincent's rule, and we will most submissively accept it. No wonder that those who take words as realities, and think they know what *everybody always everywhere* in the church of

¹ Several Treatises, &c. No. 1. p. 5.

² Ecclesia non potest errare, id est, id quod tenent omnes fideles tamquam de fide necessario est verum et de fide ; et similiter id quod docent omnes Episcopi tamquam ad fidem pertinens necessario est verum et de fide, De Conc. et Eccles. lib. 3. c. 14.

Christ thought for several centuries respecting any matter, should dogmatize about it, and anathematize dissentients. There is, in fact, only one objection against Vincent's method of proving a doctrine, namely, that its application in that strict sense which would make it capable of producing a proof, is utterly impracticable. That the principle of it, indeed, is applicable, to a limited extent, I am far from denying; and that its application to that extent is useful, as affording a probable and confirmatory argument for the truth, is also not to be doubted. Nay, in any point put forward as vital, it may well be required that we should be able to show, from the records of antient times, that the doctrine we maintain, though we maintain it from Scripture, is not a novelty, but was held in the primitive church; which is a safeguard against the dreams of enthusiasm, and so used by the Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, whose appeal to this patristical testimony in their favour is often incorrectly taken as supporting the doctrine of our opponents respecting "tradition." But to a very limited extent only is Vincent's rule applicable in any case, and therefore the certainty which would follow from it, if we were able fully to carry it out, is not attainable.

For let us consider what is the practical application which can be made of this rule. As it respects the number and value of the records remaining to us of the primitive church, I shall speak in the next section. But my object here is to consider the question generally. Let us look around us, and view the church as it exists in the present day, when the facilities of intercourse are such as no former period ever enjoyed. What sort of application could we make of Vincent's rule at the present day, even for the generation now living? How should we be able to ascertain what doctrines were held by *everybody everywhere*?

And if we go back to the times of the primitive church, the difficulty is a thousandfold greater; for we have nothing to depend upon for those times but the writings of a few antient Christian authors. So that I see not why, for fundamental points, we should not rather seek the catholic consent of some age nearer our own, of which we know more than of the first ages of Christianity. For if, as our opponents maintain, and I am by no means disposed to question, there have always been, and always will be, some true Christians in the world, real catholic consent, or that which *all* believe respecting fundamental points *in any age*, must be the orthodox faith, for otherwise the true Christians, who form part of this total, must be in fundamental error, which is absurd. But the truth is, that in no generation is the argument derived from this source *applicable*, because the knowledge of that catholic consent is not attainable.

And as Dean Sherlock justly observes, "It is absolutely im-

possible that the catholic church should be *represented*, for the catholic church is the whole multitude of Christians, considered as the whole company or multitude; now a multitude, as a multitude, can never be represented by anything but itself; there can be no formal nor virtual multitude, but the whole entire number. The catholic church signifies all Christians, and if you leave out any of the number, it is not all, and therefore is not the catholic church. . . . Anything less than all makes it cease to be catholic; and therefore the catholic church cannot be represented by a few of the whole number, because a few are not all, and therefore not the catholic church."¹

So that, on the notion that the catholic church is an infallible guide, he remarks,—“We do say, and we may safely say, that there always has been, and ever will be, a visible church; for while there are any men who visibly profess Christianity, there will be a visible church. And what then? ‘What then? Why then you must hear the church, then you must submit to the authority of the church, then you must believe as the church believes, and receive your faith from the decrees and definitions of the church.’ But pray why so? Has every visible church this authority? No, but the catholic church has. Suppose that; but *how shall I speak with the catholic church, which is dispersed over all the world, and is nothing else but the whole number of Christians all the world over?* Now it seems impossible for me to speak with all the Christians in the world, and to know what their belief is in all matters of controversy; and though the catholic church is visible, and part of is to be seen in England, and part in Holland, and part in France, &c., yet no man can see it all together, nor speak with all the Christians in the world together; and therefore, though the catholic church be visible, it cannot determine any one controversy, unless there be some visible catholic tribunal from which we must receive the faith of the whole church [which he has before proved that there is not].”²

Hence we may observe, that though we should admit, (as, indeed, we willingly do,) that there is a sense in which the church may be said to be infallible, or indefectible, in the fundamental points, it does not follow that the church is capable of being *an infallible guide* to us in such points; a distinction which the Tractators seem entirely to have overlooked.

It must never be forgotten that all the promises of Christ to the church would be fulfilled by the existence of a succession of individuals in the external church attached to the true faith.

¹ Disc. conc. nature, unity, &c. of church, pp. 44, 5; or in Bishop Gibbon's *Preservative*.

² *Ib.* p. 46. See also Bishop Taylor's *Dissuasive*, Pt. 2. Works, vol. x. pp. 347, 8.

This is distinctly admitted by Mr. Newman himself, and is an admission fatal to his doctrine of the church catholic being in any sense an infallible guide, for then it follows that we must absolutely collect the suffrages of every individual Christian before we can be certain of the orthodox faith, and therefore, as Bishop Taylor says, "If by the church they mean the communion of saints only, though the persons of men be visible, yet because their distinctive cognizance is invisible, they can never see their guide, and therefore they can never know whether they go right or wrong."¹ Nevertheless thus speaks Mr. Newman,—“The promise that the word of truth should not depart out of the mouth of the church is *satisfied* in what we see fulfilled at this day, viz. in the whole church, in all its branches, having ever maintained the faith in its essential outlines; nay, *it might be satisfied even in a much scantier fulfilment,—for instance, though this were all, which many think to be its highest meaning, that there should always be in the church some true believers.*”² And this admission makes the statement that “the whole church in all its branches has ever maintained the faith in its essential outlines,” a mere assertion requiring proof of its truth, independently of what any number of christian churches or communities can give. The public standard of faith in a church being regulated by the ruling power, may become corrupt even in essential points, while at the same time some of the members of that church adhering to the written word, and taught by the Spirit, though united in external communion with a corrupt church, through the effect of circumstances, or from mistaken notions of church communion, may preserve the pure faith. And this we hold to be in all probability the case in the Church of Rome. That there were such persons in that church before the Reformation is very capable of proof. And of these the Protestants are the successors. “Even in the times of the greatest and most general defections,” says Bishop Sanderson, “there have been always particular men, and those eminent either for number, place, learning, or godliness, who, though living in the midst of corrupt churches, and in the communion and visible profession thereof, have yet, according to the measure of their grace and knowledge, and the exigence of times and occasions, either first, openly resisted the errors, superstitions, and corruptions of their times; or secondly, noted the corruptions as they grew, and complained of them and desired reformation; or thirdly, in private dissented from them in the explication of the most dangerous doctrines, and kept themselves free from the foulest corruptions

¹ Diss. from Popery, Pt. 2. Bk. 1. § 1. Works, x. p. 347.

² Lect. p. 234.

... in these men did the succession of the true church, taking it comparatively and in the second sense, especially consist, and the visibility of it continue in the time of universal defection. In which men the true church continues visible always and perpetually without interruption."¹

And so our learned Dr. Chaloner; "There may be a church which, in respect of her chief prelates and a predominant faction thereof, may be *false and antichristian*, yet may contain some members of the true church within her pale, who though they refuse not to communicate with her, nay more, are infected with some smaller errors of the time, yet swallow not down all untruths without difference, but keep still the foundation of faith intire and unshaken. Thus it was with the church of the Jews at the coming of our Saviour . . . and thus doubtless it was with some, which being outwardly of the Church of Rome, we may justly notwithstanding challenge to ourselves."

Further, our opponents' own witness, Bishop Morton, tells us that "the catholic church," in the Creed, is this succession of true believers, the faithful people of God. "Some of our adversaries," he says, referring more particularly to Bellarmine, "to take away the distinction of visible and invisible church, have so conceited of *the catholic church, the article of christian belief*, as to think that wicked men and the limbs of Satan may be true members of this *mystical body of Christ*, even for their outward profession sake. *We* contrariwise teach, that those glorious titles of spouse of Christ and catholic church do *properly* appertain unto the faithful and elect of God; which accordeth unto S. Gregory his judgment, professing that 'within the limits of the church are all the elect, without it are the reprobate; because the holy church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, consisteth of the elect unto eternal life.' (Moral. lib. 28, c. 6. In Psalm. v. Pœnit.)² And to this agrees Dr. Chaloner.³ Thus also speaks Irenæus. Commenting on Ps. lxxxi. 1, he says,—“He speaks of the Father and Son, and of those who have received adoption; and these are the church. For this is the congregation of God, which God, that is, the Son himself collected through himself.”⁴ I need hardly remind the reader that such also is the language of our own church, which

¹ Disc. concerning the church, pp. 10, 11.

² Credo sanctam eccles. cathol. 1638. pp. 221—3.

³ Catholic Appeal, lib. i. c. 5. § 2, p. 63. And a little further on, p. 69, he tells us that Bede applied the title "catholic church," in the same way, "to the society of the elect only."

⁴ See his "Credo ecclesiam, &c." Comp. pp. 15 and 70, ed. 1638.

⁵ De Patre et Filio et de his qui adoptionem perceperunt, dicit: hi autem sunt Ecclesia. Hæc enim est synagoga Dei, quam Deus, hoc est, Filius ipse per semetipsum collegit. Adv. hæc. lib. 3. c. 6.

tells us that "the mystical body" of Christ is "*the blessed company of all faithful people*."¹

And of this body, and this body only, may it be said that it cannot err in fundamentals. To say that this church is always orthodox in fundamentals is a mere truism, because it is supposed to be composed only of true believers. And as it respects the church at large, it can only be said to be indefectible and inerrable in fundamentals, as it contains within it those individuals who form the body of true believers, as Archbishop Laud admits.²

If such, then, is the case, and that the true mystical body of Christ, consisting of the succession of individual saints scattered over the whole church, can alone be a certain and infallible guide, and that the faith of such individuals cannot even be certainly gathered from the public confessions of the churches to which they belong, then the notion of obtaining such a catholic consent as can make the church a sure guide to us falls to the ground. Such individuals moreover may always have been from the times of our earliest records, in the comparison, very few in number; and whatever may be our private opinion as to the question of fact, yet seeing that such may at any time have been the state of the church, our opinion that the case has not been so must depend upon our supposing that the maintenance of the true faith has not been so limited, which takes for granted that we know from an *independent* source what the true faith is.

But Mr. Newman identifying (like the Romanists) the church, the catholic church, with those representative bodies or individuals that have spoken in her name, points us to "the church" as our infallible and authoritative guide to the orthodox faith, having authority to declare and enforce the truth, (pp. 226—8); and by an extraordinary mistake as to the meaning of an article in the Creed, tells us that by the Creed we are bound to faith in the holy catholic church in the sense of being bound to believe what that church delivers, (Pref. p. 7,) when neither he nor any one else can tell us what that church, taking it either as the nominal catholic church, or as the company of the faithful, does deliver. And so Dr. Pusey admonishes us that "to the decisions of the universal church we owe faith."³

Nay, Mr. Newman would fain make us believe that this is the doctrine of our church, telling us (as we have noticed in a former page,) that our 20th Article shows that the English church

¹ Communion Service.

² Against Fisher, § 21. Numb. 5. Note. p. 90, ed. 1686.

³ Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 53.

holds "the infallibility of the church in matters of saving faith." (See pp. 226, 7.) Let one of his own favourite witnesses convince him of his mistake. In controversies of faith, says Leslie, (speaking in the way of dialogue with a dissenter,) "She [i. e. the Church of England] has authority as 'a witness and keeper of holy writ,' as the article words it. *Diss.* What authority is that? *C. E.* [the representative of the Church of England replies,] *The same that is acknowledged in your Westminster confession of faith, c. 31, 'ministerially to determine controversies of faith,' as you there word it.* But in regulating the worship of God, and in discipline for the better government of the church, *there to determine authoritatively.*"¹

And to Dr. Pusey's statement that "to the decisions of the universal church we owe faith," I reply in the words of the able treatise by Placette, translated and published by our Archbishop Tenison, "That there is nothing whereon the faith of all private Christians can *less* rely; and that for these reasons: 1. Because it doth not appear what is that universal church whose faith is to be the rule of ours. 2. Because it is not known what is the faith of that church. 3. Because it is not manifest whether the faith of any church assignable be true;"² on each of which points the reader will find some valuable observations in the treatise referred to.

But Mr. Newman says that "Scripture itself conveys to the church the charter of her office, to be the keeper and interpreter of Scripture."³ And he quotes three passages to prove it, of which the only one that even seems to support his statement is the following, "The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth;"⁴ and he adds, "How Protestant sectaries understand these passages, I know not; how, for instance, the first cited [which is the one given above] is understood at all by those who deny a visible church."

Now first, let us notice the disingenuousness of this. No one denies the *visibility* of the church, taking it even as referring to that church of the faithful, which consists of certain individuals scattered over the world. And to *this* church our learned Dr. Chaloner considers this passage to refer, namely "the church essential, which is *the congregation of all faithful believers.*"⁵

For are these individuals hid from the world so as not to be a

¹ Leslie, Of Private Judgment and Authority in matters of Faith. See also Archbishop Tenison's Discourse concerning a guide in matters of Faith, p. 18.

² Incurable scepticism of the Church of Rome, c. 24. See the whole of cc. 20—27. It was first published in 1688, 4to, and was inserted by Bishop Gibson in the third volume of his "Preservative."

³ Lect. p. 228.

⁴ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

⁵ Credo eccles. sanct. cathol. ed. 1638. p. 70.

visible church? Rather are they not "the light of the world," "the salt of the earth?" And however widely scattered, they form but one body, even the mystical body of Christ, united to him as their Head by one all-pervading Spirit, and with each other in the bonds of spiritual communion, having one Lord, one faith, one baptism. And may they not therefore be justly said to be in their generation "the pillar and ground of the truth," aye and be much better entitled to the name than any other body of men in the world? When it is said that the true church is invisible, it is merely indicative of our inability to point out the precise individuals who form the collective body of the faithful, and in that sense it is invisible, or rather *indefinable*; and seeing that such a body can only be recognised by us by our knowing first what is the true faith, such a body cannot be our authoritative guide to the true faith.

Nay, the phrase, "pillar and ground of the truth," might be not improperly applied to the universal nominal church of Christ as being the depositary of the oracles of God, and as having *within her* those who are living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men, and thus the supporters of the truth in a corrupt world.

I think, therefore, that the passage may well be understood as it stands, as conveying no such sense as Mr. Newman affixes to it.

But further, I will give him another answer to it, and that not from a *sectary* but from one of his own best and most learned witnesses, Bishop Stillingfleet, who, when his Romish antagonist objected this passage precisely in the sense for which Mr. Newman here contends, observes,—“But the defender saith, ‘the Holy Scripture assures us that the church is the foundation and pillar of truth.’ I confess I cannot be assured from hence that the church hath such an authority as is here pleaded for, suppose it be understood of the whole church. For how was it possible, the church at that time should be the foundation and pillar of truth, when the Apostles had the infallible Spirit, and were to guide and direct the whole church. It seems, therefore, far more probable to me that those words relate to Timothy and not to the church, by a very common ellipsis, viz. *how he ought to behave himself in the Church of God, which is the house of the living God, as a pillar and support of truth*; and to that purpose this whole epistle was written to him; as appears by the beginning of it, wherein he is charged not to give heed to fables, and to take care that no false doctrine were taught at Ephesus. Now, saith the Apostle, ‘If I come not shortly, yet I have written this epistle, that thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the church, which is the house of God, as a pillar and support of

truth.¹ What can be more natural and easy than this sense? And that there is no novelty in it appears from hence, that Gregory Nyssen (De vit. Mos. p. 225,) *expressly delivers this to be the meaning*; and many others of the Fathers apply the same phrases to the great men of the church. St. Basil (Ep. 62.) useth the very same expressions concerning Musonius. S. Chrysostom (Hom. 148, tom. 5) calls the Apostles, 'the immovable pillars of the true faith.' Theodoret (De Prov. Orat. 10) saith concerning S. Peter and S. John, 'That they were the towers of godliness and the pillars of truth.' Gregory Nazianzen (Ep. 38) calls S. Basil, 'The ground of faith and the rule of truth;' and elsewhere (Orat. 19, Ep. 29.) 'The pillar and ground of the church,' which titles he gives to another bishop at that time. And so it appears in the Greek Catena mentioned by Heinsius (in loc.) S. Basil read these words, or understood them so, when he saith, 'The apostles were the pillars of the New Jerusalem, *as it is said, The pillar and ground of the church.*' I forbear more, since these are sufficient to show that they understood this place as relating to Timothy and not to the church."² Thus speaks Bishop Stillingfleet, in a small work which I would earnestly commend to the perusal of our opponents, particularly the chapter from which I have quoted the above, where he undertakes to discuss the three following points. "First, whether Christ and his Apostles did establish such a standing judicature in the church, to which all Christians were bound to submit in matters of faith. Secondly, whether the primitive church did own such a judicature, and did accordingly govern their faith. Thirdly, *Whether it be an unreasonable thing to suppose the contrary, viz. that Christ should leave men to JUDGE FOR THEMSELVES in matters which concern their salvation* ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES."³

But it may be said, We need not surely ascertain the faith of all Christians. It will be sufficient to know what everybody always everywhere among the *pastors* of the church believed. This, it must be admitted, contracts the extent of the rule within limits very much narrower than the words signify, so that if this is all that is meant, it is difficult to see why it should not be so stated. And although, for my part, I should be quite willing to admit the conclusiveness of a proof so obtained, I cannot pass it over without reminding the reader that there have been periods in the history of God's church which should make us very jealous of such admissions for *any definite period*. Who formed

¹ Εὰν δὲ ἀρεσύνῃ, ἵνα αὐτὸς πᾶσι διὰ τὴν οὐκ ἀναστρέψαντα, ἵνα ὅτι πολλοὶ Θεοὶ ζῶντες, στυλοὶ καὶ ἰδρυμαὶ τῆς ἀληθείας. 1 Tim. iii. 15.

² Vindication of the Answer to some late papers, pp. 32, 3.

³ Ibid, p. 30.

the Church of God in the time of Ahab, when Elijah only was left of God's ministers? Who formed the Church of God in the time of our Lord, when rulers, priests, and people, with the exception of a few humble and despised individuals, cried out, Away with him, crucify him. Never let it be forgotten that it was by the *catholic consent* of his day that our blessed Lord was crucified. For the notion that such a handful of humble individuals as constituted his followers could be of any account in the matter, would have been scouted by the followers of "catholic consent" as an utter absurdity. Here were all the venerable interpreters of the Scriptures and depositaries of the tradition of the church ranged on one side, in declaring that tradition, and the true meaning of Scripture as interpreted by it, were altogether against the claims of Jesus Christ; on the other a few obscure and unlearned individuals, who pretended to interpret Scripture for themselves. Could the followers of "catholic consent" doubt for a moment on which side the truth was to be found?

These cases very clearly show us how much we may be mistaken if we make the majority, or even the pastors of the church, the representatives of the true church of Christ, the sure witnesses of the orthodox faith.

But granting all that is here asked,—and it may, no doubt, be presumed that among the collective body of the faithful forming the true church, there are not wanting faithful pastors of Christ's flock,—what do we gain by it? How do we know what everybody always everywhere among the pastors of the primitive church believed? How should we be able to ascertain this even for the generation now living? How much less, then, can we ascertain it for generations that lived ages since; of whom we know nothing, but from the writings of a few individuals who lived at the period, and who themselves were unable to trace it.

Take the case of the Church of England alone at the present day, with her express and particular confession of faith branched out into points on which the public records of the early church are altogether silent. In the belief of that confession, all her members profess to agree. But do they all hold in reality the same doctrine on all the points of that confession? Take the doctrine of justification, for instance. Will the article give you the precise doctrine held by all the members of the church? No; one interprets it in one way, others in another; and he who reads it to know what is the view of our church upon the subject, may, if his inclination so dispose him, strain it to a third sense. And each will tell you the article is plainly on his side; for it is as impossible to bind error by words, as by chains. It has been often bound with both; and both have been broken through and burst asunder by it, and even turned to the promotion of its own pur-

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poses. How, then, I ask, even with this confession of faith, in our hands, shall we be able to tell what everybody everywhere in the Church of England holds respecting the doctrine of justification? Clearly as the article speaks, it does not show what precise views are entertained on the subject, by all who subscribe it. I can no more say, therefore, what are the precise views of all our clergy, because they have subscribed this article, than I can say what their views are, because they hold Scripture to be the Word of God, and profess to believe all that it delivers. Even where there is so definite a confession of faith, therefore, there is some uncertainty as to the views of those who profess to hold it. Nay, let us hear what Mr. Newman himself says on this subject. "In the English Church we shall hardly find ten or twenty neighbouring clergymen who agree together, and that not in the non-essentials of religion, but as to what are its elementary and necessary doctrines." (pp. 394, 5.)

Now, then, let us go back to primitive times, and let our opponents show us of which of the primitive churches we have such evidence of the doctrine held by it, as we have in the case of the Church of England. No; we have not any such public confessions even of *particular* churches to guide us, much less of the Catholic Church.

There is nothing, indeed, that could *claim* to be considered the voice of the Catholic Church, until we come to the Council of Nice. How is it possible, therefore, that we can undertake to say what all the pastors of the various churches, or even of all the Apostolically-founded churches, believed? To take the few individuals whose writings happen to remain to us, as the representatives of this whole body, is as absurd as it would be a thousand years hence to take the writings of some half dozen individuals of the last three centuries that may happen to have survived to that period, as the representatives of the whole church since the Reformation to this age; and who, if they happen to be Romanists, would represent the whole Catholic Church as agreeing with them, and their only opponents to be a few contemptible sectaries.

Nay, those individuals themselves could not tell what was the faith of "the church," when "the church" had not publicly defined it. And hence the Romanists themselves make this apology for the errors of some of the Fathers on various points, that "the church" had not then determined it; allowing that individuals might easily err, where there had been no public decision of the church; while, nevertheless, the desire and purpose of such individuals must have been to retain the faith of the church, which, therefore, they must have supposed themselves to do; and would, therefore, in their writings, have maintained that they did.

Hence, still further, suppose we were even to grant that the consent of the public confessions of faith of all the primitive churches for the first few centuries, might be taken as indicative of such a catholic consent as ought to be considered a sufficient proof of the oral teaching of the Apostles, where can we find those confessions? The utmost of the kind that we can find for the first three centuries, is in the remains left to us of three authors of the second and third centuries, who, in their controversies with some who were opposed to them, give us (as we shall see presently) a Creed shorter than what is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, and consisting of articles which, in the present day, are not called in question; for which they claim the consent of the churches founded by the Apostles.

Now these Creeds are, no doubt, entitled to great respect. But when we recollect that these churches had no fixed and publicly agreed-upon formula or confession of faith to be judged by, and that even in the case of churches that have, the representation given of their doctrine, varies with the private views of him who gives it, we cannot surely accept even these as infallible witnesses. These writers, to use the words of Doctor Barrow, "allege the general consent of churches planted by the Apostles, and propagated by continual successions of bishops from those whom the Apostles did ordain, in doctrines and practices opposite to those devices, as a *good argument*; and so, indeed, it *then* was, next to a demonstration against them."¹ Then the truth of the statement could be tested; and doubtless their *report* of such agreement, is a strong argument in our day; but one, the strength of which is greatly diminished to what it was then; and that on several accounts. We cannot verify it. We have to trust to the report of two or three partial writers, who themselves must have judged greatly from report. And when we find, as we shall hereafter, how freely the name of the church was afterwards used for doctrines that had no pretence to claim such an authority, we can hardly consider these testimonies conclusive. We have not even the writings of those who were opposed to them, to consult in the matter; and who, we know, laid claim to apostolical tradition in their favour. Even in the few points mentioned in those Creeds, therefore, we believe that they were held generally in the primitive church, because we find them so clearly expressed in Scripture, not because we have any certain testimony of catholic consent in their favour. And lastly, those Creeds, if admitted, are open to almost all the errors which agitate the church, having been originally directed against

¹ Works, vol. vi. p. 198.

those outrageous absurdities of the Valentinians and Marcionites, which, in the present day are equally despised by all parties.

Moreover, were we to suppose that what is called a General Council might be taken as an undoubted representative of the whole church in its day, yet there was not a single Council of the kind for the first three centuries and more. Nay, if we speak of a Council truly general, faithfully representing the whole church, it may well be doubted whether there ever was yet such a Council. Bishop Stillingfleet, speaking on this subject, and showing the far better title which the Antient Councils had to be called General than the modern ones of Rome so called, adds,—“I do not say, There was ever such a General Council as did fully represent the universal church, which could not be done without provincial Councils summoned before in all parts of Christendom, and the delegation from them of such persons as were to deliver their sense in the matter of faith to be debated in the General Council, and I have reason to question whether this were ever done.”¹

And suppose such a Council assembled, and having (which is all that would be practicable at any time) a few deputies from every church in existence, could we be sure that those deputies spoke anything more than the sense of the majority of the pastors of the church they represented? Take an instance. What do our opponents think of the representation made by the English deputies at the Synod of Dort of the doctrine of the Church of England? Let them honestly say, whether they believe that the doctrine of the Church of England was truly represented there. If they do, what becomes of their subscription; if they do not, they at once confess that such assemblies afford no proof of the doctrine of the churches there represented. Nay, it undeniably follows from this case, that it is only the majority that is represented, because it is notorious that there were those, as for instance Bishop Montague, in the Church of England, who took a very different view of the doctrine of our church to what was there given.

On this whole subject, therefore, Archbishop Tenison, when discoursing of a guide in matters of faith, speaking of the pretensions that have been made by the Romanists to an infallible one, says, (and his words apply equally to the arguments of our opponents,)—“This guide could not be *the church diffusive of the first ages*. For the suffrages of every Christian were never gathered. *And if we will have their sense, they must rise from the dead and give it us.* This guide cannot be the faith, as such, of *all*

¹ Vindication of the Answer to some late papers, p. 53, and see Placette on the Incurable Scepticism of the Church of Rome, c. 12.

the governors of all the primitive churches. The sense of it was never collected. There were antiently general Creeds, but such as especially related to the heresies then on foot; and who can affirm upon grounds of certainty, that each bishop in the world consented to each Article, or to each so expressed? This guide is not a *Council perfectly free and universal*. For a guide which cannot be had is none. If such a Council could assemble, it would not err in the necessities of faith But *there never was yet an universal Council properly so called* In the Councils called general, if we speak comparatively, there were not many southern or western bishops present at them. It was thus at that first œcumenical Council, the Council of Nice; though in one sacred place, as Eusebius hath noted, there were assembled Syrians and Cilicians, Phœnicians and Arabians, Palæstinians, Egyptians, Thebæans, Libyans, Mesopotamians, a Persian, a Scythian bishop, and many others from other countries. But there was but one bishop for Africa, one for Spain, one for Gaul, two priests as deputies of the infirm and aged bishop of Rome; whilst, for instance sake, there were seventeen bishops for the small province of Isauria This guide is not *the present church declaring to particular Christians the sense of the church of former ages*. How can this declaration be made, seeing churches differ, and each church calls itself the true one, and pretendeth to the primitive pattern."¹

SECTION III.—THE INADEQUACY OF THE RECORDS THAT REMAIN TO US OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH TO BE TAKEN AS ANYTHING LIKE A SUFFICIENT AND INDUBITABLE REPRESENTATION OF THE FAITH OF THE WHOLE CHURCH.

WE now come to the consideration of the number and value of the writings themselves from which we have to collect the "catholic consent" of the primitive church. And, I think, it will be evident to every impartial reader, that if we include in our review the writings of the first three centuries, we are giving our opponents as long a period as they can with any shadow of justice require. For the argument is, that we must go to the primitive church to learn the doctrines of the faith, because, as corruptions came in by degrees, the nearer we get to the times of Christ and his Apostles, the more likely we are to obtain the

¹ Discourse concerning a guide in matters of faith, pp. 14—18, or Bishop Gibson's *Preservative*. Tit. iv. c. l. p. 8, &c. and see the whole of Placette's "Incurable Scepticism of the Church of Rome;" and respecting General Councils, see Dean Sherlock's "Vindication of some Protestant Principles," &c. in Gibson's *Preservative*, vol. iii. p. 415.

truth unmixed with error. I know, indeed, that we are so far removed from the Apostolic age, that men who lived some three or four centuries after the Apostles, are viewed by many as almost their contemporaries. The Apostles and the Fathers of the first three or four centuries are to us in this respect like the stars. They are all so far off from us that they appear almost equidistant. The difference of their distances is so small in the comparison, that it is almost lost sight of. But if we allow ourselves to judge thus hastily, we may easily be deceived. It cannot be pretended that what is not found in the writers of the first three centuries can be proved to be the oral teaching of the Apostles by the testimony of subsequent writers, though subsequent writers may act as a check upon those of this period, and may also be included for a *negative* testimony, that is so negating a doctrine by their silence; for if a doctrine is unknown to the Fathers of the first five centuries, there is still stronger reason to suppose it to be false, than if we could only say that it was unknown to the Fathers of the first three. The longer the period you can include for the negative argument, the stronger it becomes. And hence, we willingly give the Romanists the first five or six centuries from which to prove the doctrines in dispute between them and us. But for a positive testimony in proof of any doctrine the case is precisely the contrary. Here we want respectable proof of catholic consent at a period very near the apostolical times.

Let us observe, then, on this head,

First, and more especially, the *paucity* of the remains of the primitive church for the first three centuries.

That there were many writers at all in the church *compared with its extent*, during the ages of persecution, is not probable. But when we come to view the records that actually remain to us, we shall find that we can hardly reckon upon having one witness for a million. For who are our witnesses for this period? We have first, nine brief epistles to various churches by Clement, Polycarp, and Ignatius. We have the works of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen and Lactantius; a few small Treatises by Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Hippolytus, Gregory of Neocæsarea, Minucius Felix and Arnobius. These with a few fragments of some other authors preserved by subsequent writers, form the sum total of our witnesses for more than the first three hundred years. And almost all these works are written in reply, either to the heathen opponents of Christianity, or to heresies which in the present day would be equally despised by all parties, and consequently have a very indirect reference to any of the disputes by which the church is now agitated. These, then, are to be taken,

according to our opponents, as the certain representatives of the whole church, as equivalent to *everybody always everywhere* during this period, and hence, as presenting us, where they agree, with a certain record of the oral teaching of the Apostles.

Now, whether these writers do give a consentient testimony in behalf of any doctrine is a point which we shall discuss hereafter. But at present I would only submit to the reader whether such a claim in behalf of the few individuals above named, namely, that their concurrent statements should be taken as a certain record of the consent of the whole church, and so of the oral teaching of the Apostles, is admissible.

Consider the small number of those whom we are thus making the uncommissioned plenary representatives of the universal church for three hundred years. And that too when we know that they form but a very small proportion even of the writers of those ages. For the author of the "Synopsis of Scripture," attributed to Athanasius, having given a list of the canonical books of the New Testament, says,—“Such are the books of the New Testament, those at least that are canonical, and as it were the first fruits or anchors and props of our faith, as being written and composed by the Apostles of Christ themselves, and those that associated with him, and were taught by him; but afterwards, in accordance with their teaching, and in harmony with them, *myriads of other books without number* were composed by the Fathers who in their time were great and excelling in wisdom and taught by God.”¹ And again, further on, he speaks of these writers as “very many and infinite in number.”²

Is it not, then, absurd to make the testimony of the few individuals above mentioned equivalent to the “catholic consent” of the whole primitive church for the first three centuries?

For the whole of this period, be it observed, we have no recorded public confessions either of churches or councils to guide us. The utmost of this kind to be found among the records of this period are the brief confessions (already alluded to, and which will be considered more particularly hereafter) recorded by Irenæus, Tertullian and Origen, and for which they claim the consent of the churches founded by the Apostles.

It must be added also, that were we to include a longer period in our review, so as to take in some of the Councils best entitled

¹ Τόσαυτα καὶ τὰ τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἀρχαίαν βιβλίαν, τὰ γὰρ καὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἡμῶν οἷον ἀποστόλων καὶ ἀρχαίων καὶ ἡρώδων· οἱ παρ’ αὐτῶν τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τῶν καὶ συγγνωμένων καὶ ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ μαθητευθέντων γραφῶν καὶ ἐκτεθέντων. Ἐπειτα γὰρ ὡς τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀκολουθῶν καὶ συμφωνῶν, ἀλλὰ μὴ καὶ ἀνεκρίβητα βιβλία ἐκτεθέντων ὑπὸ τῶν κατὰ καιροὺς μεγάλων καὶ σοφωτάτων διεφέων πατέρων. *Synopsis Script. Sect. § 4.* Inter Athan. Op. vol. ii. p. 131. ed. Bened.

² Παρὰ πολλὰ καὶ ἀριθμῶν. *Ib.*

to the name of General, our opponents would gain nothing by it. For such Councils have proved themselves to be far from infallible witnesses of the faith of the true church by contradicting each other. If we come to consider what Councils we have that can make any pretences to being considered general, we shall find that the two which can make the best claim, namely, those of Nice and Ariminum with Seleucia, are entirely opposed to each other in a vital point, and that the latter, which Bishop Stillingfleet calls, "the most General Council we read of in Church history,"¹ decided against the orthodox faith.

So that Augustin, when disputing with an Arian, virtually admits that, as far as the testimony of Councils is concerned, his opponent's argument from the Council of Ariminum would be as good as his own from the Council of Nice; and therefore, that they must both betake themselves to the Scriptures.²

It is not a little strange, then, how our opponents can use the language they do as to the authority of the witness given by General Councils respecting the faith, and even charge their doctrine upon our own church, because of its admission of the determinations of the first four General Councils as agreeable to the orthodox faith, when it is even made a ground of objection to us by well informed Romanists, that we admit those Councils, not on the ground of any *intrinsic* authority in the nature of their witness, but because we judge their witness to be correct, when it might have been otherwise.³ We may say to the Tractators, as it was long ago said by a learned writer among us to the Romanists,—"If General Councils cannot err, how come these gentlemen to be persuaded that the Council of *Ariminum*, consisting of about six hundred bishops, which also was backed by a Synod of Eastern bishops at Seleucia, did not discharge the church of all obligation to quit [?] hold] the belief and profession of the Son's being consubstantial with the Father? The second Council of Ephesus had a general summons, and in respect of the number of bishops, it was as general as Councils sometimes were which are esteemed so, and yet we all say they erred with Dioscorus. And many more instances there are of this nature."⁴

Secondly, the view we have of antiquity, in the remains of it that are left to us, is a *partial* view.

¹ Vind. of Answ. to some late papers, pp. 53, 4.

² Adv. Maximin. lib. 2, c. 14. tom. 8. col. 704.

³ R. H.'s Rational Account of doctrine of Roman Catholics concerning Guide in Controv. Disc. 3. c. 4. § 40. p. 174. 2d. ed. 1673.

⁴ Hutchinson and Claggett's Auth. of Councils, &c. pp. 7, 8; or in Bishop Gibson's Preservative, tit. 4. vol. 1. p. 143. The same doctrine is maintained by Dean Field. See his Treatise "Of the Church," p. 851. 3d. ed. And by Bishop Jer. Taylor, in his Liberty of Prophecy, § 6.

When estimating the title of the writings that remain to the character in which they are put forward by our opponents, we must pursue the inquiry, not as men who have already decided in favour of particular doctrines, not with a bias towards particular Fathers, but with a simple regard to the intrinsic value of their testimony, apart from any consideration of the doctrine which it supports; for otherwise our decision will be founded merely upon our own prejudices, and thus, though it may be very satisfactory to ourselves, will bring no conviction to others, and forms no sufficient foundation for our own faith. The writings of the Tractators appear to me to be very open to censure in this respect. There is throughout them a tacit assumption that such men as Ignatius and Irenæus, &c. were so excellent and orthodox, that we may well abide by their decisions in important points, as representing to us the faith of the true church. And this is the secret which explains all their statements. But this is, in fact, an assumption of the very thing which we profess to be seeking, namely, the orthodox faith. How, I beg to ask, did we obtain this bias in favour of these men, but from finding that they agreed upon the whole in our view of the orthodox faith as delivered by the Scriptures?

We must observe, therefore, that in the works which remain to us, we see antiquity through the medium of those records and writings only which the ruling party in the church has allowed to be preserved.

Whatever, then, may be our private view as to the effect produced, whether it has been more or less favourable to what we hold to be the orthodox faith, it is undeniable that this fact greatly affects the value of those writings, as giving an impartial and certain representation of the faith of the whole church. It is certain that thousands of books published in the primitive church have perished; and among these the works of all those who were condemned by any conciliar decisions. Now this is, indeed, what might be expected. The influence of the ruling party would naturally prevail,—especially at a time when books were not multiplied with the facility with which they now are,—for the gradual extinction of the writings of those who had been publicly condemned. When Christianity came to be protected and supported by the state, we find the ruling party in the church, whichever it might be, enforcing strict prohibitions, and a rigid suppression, of the books on the other side, even though they might have been written long before by those who had died in the communion of the catholic church. Thus we find the fifth General Council (as it is called) anathematizing the books of three bishops, Ibas, Theodoret, and Theodorus of Mopsuesta, all of whom had died long before in the commu-

nion of the catholic church: and on the case of one of whom, namely Ibas, the fourth General Council had expressly passed a different decision. And in this Council (as "the seventh General Council and all the Greek historians testify"¹) the condemnation of Origen, who had been dead about three centuries, was pronounced; and this condemnation is probably the reason why we have so few of his works remaining in the original Greek.

And as the church became more corrupt, the effect of these anathemas and prohibitions, (whatever it may have been previously,) became proportionably injurious to the cause of truth, as we see remarkably exemplified in the canon of the second Nicene Council that decided in favour of image worship, which decreed, as Du Pin himself represents it, "that all the works against images shall be put in the palace of the Patriarch of Constantinople, among the heretical books, and threatens to depose or excommunicate those that shall conceal them,"² which was in accordance with the letter of Pope Adrian to the Council, in which (as Du Pin says) he "establisheth the worship of images, and affirms that the church of Rome received it by tradition from St. Peter; and proves, by a false relation, that in St. Sylvester's time, St. Peter's and St. Paul's pictures were in the church;"³ and accordingly his Legates required that all the books against images should either be anathematized or burnt. Daille, who mentions this case, justly remarks,⁴ that it is probably the effect of this anathema that we have not the original Greek of the Epistle of Epiphanius to John of Jerusalem anywhere remaining, but only the Latin translation of it by Jerome, which has been preserved to us among St. Jerome's own letters. And hence the want of the original has been taken advantage of by Dureus, Sanders, and Baronius, to deny that it is a work of Epiphanius.⁵ Such is the progress of corruption in these matters.

So, also, Pamelius confesses that the Greek Treatise of Tertullian on baptism was probably suppressed on account of his having there defended the opinion that the baptism of heretics was null and void.⁶

Upon this principle the Church of Rome has acted ever since, particularly from the period of the Reformation; at the very

¹ Du Pin, who, however, contends that it was "in the Council held in 540 under Mennas, which made a part of the fifth Council." See Du Pin, under fifth General Council.

² Can. 9. See Du Pin under this Council.

³ Du Pin, *ib.*

⁴ On the use of the Fathers, Part i. c. 4.

⁵ See Cocci Censura in Pref.

⁶ See Pamel. Annot. in Tertull. p. 650. ed. Col. Agripp. 1617.

dawn of which this principle of suppressing whatever might be contrary to her views, appears to have been, as far as was in her power, rigidly enforced; for, at the tenth session of the fifth Council of Lateran under Leo X., in 1515, it was ordained, in the Third Constitution, that all books printed at Rome should be examined by the Pope's Vicar, and Master of the Holy Palace, and in other places by the Bishop and Inquisitor, under a penalty against the printer of forfeiting the books issued without such examination, which were to be burnt, and paying a heavy fine; a decree which applied to the works of the antients, as well as the moderns; as appears from the fact, that when all the bishops present but one had assented to it, the remaining one remarked that he assented to it as respected new works, but not as to old. And as we are indebted almost wholly to the Romanists for all the earlier editions of the Fathers, the mischief that may have been done to their remains in this way is incalculable; not merely by the suppression of whole treatises, but more especially by their corruptions of the works which they have given, which we shall notice presently.

In the Council of Trent this decree of the Lateran Council was specially recognized and enforced. And from these decrees sprung the Prohibitory and Expurgatory Indexes with which the world has since been favoured; which have not spared even the works of the antients. Dr. James tells us that in the first two editions of the "*Bibliotheca Patrum*," "there are many treatises which make rather against, than for them; as well knew the Roman Index, which hath *commanded them to be left clean out; and according hereto, they are omitted in the last edition of Paris*;"¹ namely, the third of 1609, 10.² It was originally designed that the Admonitions of Agapetus should have been among the number; but this work seems to have been afterwards spared, on the condition of a marginal note being affixed to an obnoxious passage, which was this; "The king hath no superior in the earth."³ "Write in the margin," says the Roman Index, "Understand among secular and temporal dignities; for the ecclesiastical dignity is superior to the kingly."⁴ A gloss, which is not only contrary to the words, but directly contradicted by several other

¹ By M. de la Bigne, Paris, 1575—9, 9 vols; and Paris, 1589, 9 vol.

² James's Corruption, &c. Part 3. n. 19. p. 214. These two first editions, therefore, were prohibited. See James. Index Gen. Libr. Prohib. Oxon. 1627, 12mo, under "*Bibliotheca*."

³ The "*auctarium*" and "*index*" to this third edition, were also ordered to be expurgated in various parts. See James. Index Libr. Prohib. under "*Bibliotheca*."

⁴ Non enim habet [i. e. Rex] in terris se quiequam exceleius.

⁵ Scribe ad marginem. Intellige inter seculares et temporales dignitates, nam ecclesiastica dignitas sublimior est regia. Ind. Rom. p. 200.

passages of the work ; but which will be found duly inserted in the Bibliotheca.¹

We may here observe, also, that in the Roman Index of 1559, we find, among the prohibited books, Bertram on the body and blood of Christ, the Imperfect work on Matthew, attributed to Chrysostom, (of which their own Sixtus Senensis says that it had been "approved for ages by the common consent of the church," and which had been quoted by Gratian, Aquinas, the Rhemists, and other Romanists, as a genuine work of Chrysostom,) and "a Treatise on the true and pure church;" "most falsely," says the Inquisitor, "ascribed to Athanasius."² As it respects the last of these, the prohibition appears to have been but too successful, as I can find no notice of it anywhere else; but, in the case of the two former, it has fortunately proved but *brutum fulmen*. And doubtless these Prohibitory Indexes have been less injurious, than the tacit suppression of the works before publication; for, when once abroad, the universal destruction of the copies was no easy task. Of this, the Romanists have been well aware; and consequently have done their best to strangle obnoxious works in the birth. A curious case of this kind was brought to light by Archbishop Wake, which is throughout so illustrative of the Romish system in this matter, that I will here present it to the reader.

In 1548, Peter Martyr, in his dispute with Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, concerning the Eucharist, produced a passage from an "Epistle of Chrysostom to Cæsarius," evidently overturning the Popish doctrine of transubstantiation, professing that he had copied the epistle from a Florentine MS., and placed it in the library of Archbishop Cranmer. Bishop Gardiner, not being able to deny this, endeavoured to get over the difficulty as well as he could; and ascribed the epistle to another John of Constantinople, who lived about the beginning of the sixth century. This answer was adopted by others: though, as the Archbishop observes, "still the argument recurred upon them; forasmuch as this other John was in the beginning of the sixth age; and transubstantiation, by consequence, was not the doctrine of the church then;" and accordingly, the copy in Cranmer's Library being, of course, lost in the dispersion of his books, Cardinal Perron, in his Treatise of the Eucharist, "flatly accuses Peter Martyr of forgery; and uses abundance of arguments to persuade the world that there never was any such epistle as had been pretended." And so says Bellarmine.³ Thus the matter stood till 1680, when Bigo-

¹ See James. Ib. pp. 213 &c.

² James's Corruption, &c. Pt. 2. n. 2. p. 165.

³ Tractatus de vera et pura ecclesia, D. Athanasio falsissime adscriptus.

⁴ Nihil ejusmodi umquam scripisse Chrysostomum, neque enim in tote Chrysostomi opere ullus est liber vel Epistola ad Cæsarium. De sacra. euchar. lib. 2. c. 22.

tius, having brought a copy of the epistle from Florence, printed it with his edition of Palladius, and strengthened it, says Dr. Wake; "with such attestations, as show it to be beyond all doubt authentic." But, before the publication of the book, *this part of it was interdicted and suppressed by the doctors of the Sorbonne, and "the printed leaves cut out of the book;"* and "of this, the edition of Palladius of that year remains a standing monument, both in the preface and in the book."¹ However, "the very leaves cut out by those doctors of Mr. Bigot's preface and the epistle rased out of the book," fell into the hands of Dr. Wake, by whom they were published in the appendix to his "Defence of the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Church of England against M. de Meaux," (pp. 127, &c.) The offensive passage is this. I use Dr. Wake's translation. "Before the bread is consecrated, we call it bread; but when the grace of God, by the priest, has consecrated it, it is no longer called bread, but is esteemed worthy to be called the Lord's body, *although the nature of bread still remains in it.*"²

It only remained for the Romanists that came after, to maintain that the whole epistle is spurious; which is accordingly done without any hesitation, by the Benedictines, in their elaborate edition of Chrysostom. It is with them "altogether spurious," (omnino spuria,) written by nobody knows who; though they admit that it is quoted as Chrysostom's, by John Damascen, Anastasius the Presbyter, Nicephorus, and others.³

Indeed, as Archbishop Wake says, "So many antient authors have cited it as St. Chrysostom's Epistle to Cæsarius, such fragments of it remain in the most antient writers as authentic; that he who after all these shall call this piece in question, may with the same reasonableness doubt of all the rest of his works; which, perhaps upon less grounds, are on all sides allowed as true and undoubted."⁴ So much for the impartiality of the Benedictines, upon whom far too much reliance has been placed.

It is impossible, then, to consider the remains we have of the antient ecclesiastical authors, as beyond doubt exhibiting to us all the variations of doctrine that were to be found in the primitive

¹ For the truth of which I can also testify, having a copy of the book; which is not, indeed, of uncommon occurrence.

² Antequam sanctificetur panis, panem nominamus, divina autem illum sanctificante gratia, mediante sacerdote, liberatus est quidem appellatione panis, dignus autem habitus est Dominici corporis appellatione, etiam si natura panis in ipso permansit. Wake's app. pp. 156, 7.

³ See Chrysost. Op. ed. Bened. Tom. 3. Pref. § 3. et Monit. in Ep. ad Cæsar. pp. 737, 8.

⁴ P. 145. This mode of getting rid of treatises in which passages occur opposed to their views, has long been in common use among the Romanists. See the Preface to Cœci Censura.

church; and therefore we could not regard even the consent of those writings, as representing the Catholic consent of the whole church. It is no aid to the cause of orthodoxy, to put forth such a claim. It looks like a confession of weakness; a desire to entrap men into a belief of doctrines for whose divine origin there is (as they will suppose) no sufficient foundation.

Thirdly, the view we have of antiquity, in the remains of it that are left to us, labours under much uncertainty, from the way in which the works of the Fathers have been mutilated and corrupted, and works forged in their name.

None have suffered so much in this respect as the Fathers. He who sits down to read the Fathers, in order to be guided by them to the true faith, will find himself encumbered at the outset with difficulties of the most formidable kind. For if he is to take them as the ground upon which his faith is to rest, it is very necessary that the works upon which he depends, should be really theirs; and that they should be in the state in which their authors left them. But as to a vast number of these works he will find not only that their authors are disputed, but that they are set down by many as the forgeries of mischievous or heretical persons; and that many others have been grievously corrupted, (and how far the corruption extends, it is impossible to tell,) by the heretics in antient, and by Romanists in modern times.

Thus above one hundred and eighty treatises, professing to be written by authors of the first six centuries, are repudiated by the more learned of the Romanists themselves as, most of them, rank forgeries; and the others not written by those whose names they bear; though, be it observed, they have been almost all quoted over and over again by celebrated controversial writers of the Romish communion, in support of their errors against Protestants.¹

And any one who will consult the works that have been written by Cave, Du Pin, and others, on the ecclesiastical authors of antiquity, and particularly that of Robert Cooke on the spurious and doubtful works attributed to the Fathers,² will find three or four times as many more, noted as either shameless forgeries, or at least of very doubtful authority, and very uncertain authorship.

So that before we commence our task, we must strike out of our list of patristical relics a whole mass of writings, which the criticism of an age removed a thousand years and more from the period when these writings profess to have been published, may

¹ See James's *Corruption of Fathers*, &c. Part 1.

² *Ron. Cocci Censura quorundam scriptorum*, &c. Lond. 1614. 4to.

command us to reject. This, it must be admitted, is not a very satisfactory commencement; because we are naturally disposed to ask whether we can be quite sure as to the genuineness of those that remain; and shall, in fact, find ourselves not a little puzzled to know the grounds upon which some have been eliminated, and others allowed to stand, not to say that our critics are sometimes grievously divided among themselves; some contending stoutly for the genuineness of a piece, others as stiffly maintaining the contrary.

But what is worse, we have also to guard against the corruptions introduced into the genuine works of the Fathers. This is an evil which it is still more difficult to remedy, especially as it is one which has been growing since the very earliest times. We have to deal with the corruptions both of antient and modern times. Of these interpolations we find many complaints in the Fathers themselves. Thus Augustine, speaking of a charge of corruption brought against the works of Cyprian, says,—“For the integrity and a knowledge of the writings of any one bishop, however illustrious, could not be so preserved, as the canonical Scripture is preserved by the variety of languages in which it is found, and by the order and succession of its rehearsal in the church; against which nevertheless there have not been wanting those who have forged many things under the names of the Apostles. To no purpose indeed, because it was so in esteem, so constantly read, so well known. But what such boldness could do in the case of writings not supported by canonical authority, is proved by the impiety with which it has not even refrained from exerting itself against those that are supported by a knowledge so universal.”¹ This testimony is the more observable, because it shows that in Augustine's view, the Holy Scriptures stand upon very different ground in this respect to the writings of the Fathers, and that we may justly fear corruptions in the latter to which the former are from the circumstances of the case in an infinitely smaller degree liable.

“So great,” says Isidorus Hispalensis, “is the cunning of the heretics, that they mix falsehood with truth, and evil things with good, and generally insert the poison of their error in things that are salutary, that they may more easily insinuate their wicked

¹ Neque enim sic potuit integritas atque notitia litterarum unius quamlibet illustis episcopi custodiri, quemadmodum Scriptura canonica tot linguarum litteris et ordine et successione celebrationis ecclesiasticæ custoditur, contra quam tamen non defuerunt qui sub nominibus apostolorum multa confingerent. Frustra quidem, quia illa sic commendata, sic celebrata, sic nota est; verum quid possit adversum litteras non canonica auctoritate fundatas etiam hinc demonstravit impiæ conatus audaciæ, quod et adversum eas quæ tanta notitiæ mole firmatæ sunt sese erigere non prætermisit. August. Ep. ad Vincent. Rogat. ep. 93, vol. ii. col. 246, 7, ed. Bened.

error under the appearance of the truth. The heretics generally indite their doctrines under the name of the catholic doctors, that being read without question, they may be believed. Sometimes also they deceitfully insert their blasphemies in the books of our doctors, and corrupt the true doctrine by adulteration, namely, either by adding what is impious or taking away what is agreeable to the faith. We must cautiously meditate upon, and test with careful discrimination, what we read, that according to the apostolic admonition we may both hold fast that which is good and oppose that which is contrary to the truth; and so take instruction from the good as to remain uninjured by the evil."¹

So also it is said by Anastasius Sinaita,—"The catholics of Alexandria told me, that after the times of the blessed Eulogius the Pope [i. e. Patriarch of Alexandria] there was a certain Augustalius [or, Augustan prefect] there, a follower of Severus, who for long time had fourteen amanuenses of like mind with himself, to sit down at his command and falsify the books containing the doctrines of the Fathers, and especially those of the holy Cyril."²

Of the partisans of Dioscorus it is said in the letter of the monks of Palestine, preserved by Evagrius, that they had frequently corrupted the works of the Fathers, and had attached the names of Athanasius, Gregory Thaumaturgus and Julius to many of the works of Apollinarius.³

It would be easy to add other passages of a similar nature. But we will proceed to point out some particular instances.

Of the constitutions of Clement of Rome, it is complained by the sixth Council, that certain corruptions of the true faith had been introduced into them by heretical persons, which had ob-

¹ Tanta est hereticorum calliditas ut falsas veris malaque bonis permisceant, salutaribusque rebus plerumque erroris sui virus interserant, quo facilius possint pravitatem perversi dogmatis sub specie persuadere veritatis. Plerumque sub nomine catholicorum doctorum heretici sua dicta conscribunt, ut indubitanter lecta credantur. Nonnunquam etiam blasphemias suas latenti dolo in libris nostrorum inserunt, doctrinamque veram adulterando corrumpunt; scilicet vel adijciendo quæ impia sunt vel auferendo quæ pia sunt. Cautè meditanda cautoque sensu probanda sunt quæ leguntur, ut juxta Apostolica monita et teneamus quæ recta sunt et refutemus quæ contraria veritati existunt, sicque in bonis instruiamur, ut a malis illæsi permaneamus. Lib. 3. Sentent. c. 12. Rom. 1802. tom. 6.

² Λογούοντο τούτοις ἡμεῖς ἐν τῇ καθολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐν Ἀλεξανδρίᾳ, ὅτι μετὰ τοὺς χρόνους τοῦ μακαρίου Εὐλογίου τοῦ Πάπα, γέγονε τις Αὐγουστάλιος ὑπαὺς τοῦ Σεβήρου, καὶ ἐπὶ ἱκανοὺς χρόνους ὥστε ἡ καλλιγραφία συμφορᾶς αὐτοῦ, κατ' ἐπιτροπὴν αὐτοῦ καθίστασθαι, καὶ φαινομένης τὰς βίβλους τῶν dogμάτων τῶν πατρῶν, καὶ μάλιστα τὰς τοῦ ἁγίου Κυρίλλου. Anastas. Sinait. Vis dux. c. 10. p. 198. ed. 1806.

³ Καὶ γὰρ καὶ λόγους πατρῶν πολλὰς ἐκδόκασι, πολλοὺς δὲ Ἀπολλινάριου λόγους Ἀθανασίου καὶ Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θαυματουργοῦ καὶ Ἰουλίῳ δὲ τῶν ἐπιγράμτων ἀνατίθηκασι. Evagri. Scholast. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. 31. See also Leont. Byzant. Adv. Apollinariat. in Canis. Antiq. Lect. tom. iv. pt. 1 p. 105. or in Biblioth. Patr. Tom. xii. p. 701. ed. Galland.

secured the beautiful character of the divine decrees.¹ The same is said of the "Recognitions" attributed to him, by Ruffinus,² Photius,³ and Epiphanius.⁴

That the epistles of Ignatius were corrupted by heretics, we have proof in the variations of the copies still extant of them; under whose name also are to be found several epistles now generally given up as spurious.

In the same case, probably, are the "Shepherd" of Hermas, and the Epistle of Barnabas, and hence by some they are wholly rejected as spurious, while by others, as Archbishop Wake, &c., they are defended as the true productions of those apostolical men; and certainly a book under the former title, and containing passages to be found in that we now have, is quoted with the greatest respect by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others. As it now stands, however, it is disfigured by passages hardly reconcilable with the orthodox faith.

Nay, of one of the most valuable remains of antiquity we possess, the work of Irenæus against heresies, we are warned by our present learned Bishop of Lincoln, "we should always bear in mind, that far the greater portion of the work of Irenæus is extant only in a barbarous Latin translation, which lies under heavy suspicions of interpolation."⁵

The boldness of these corrupters of the writings of the Fathers may be conceived from the fact that they did not spare an author's works, even in his own life time, witness the complaint of Dionysius of Corinth; "I wrote some epistles," he says, "at the request of the brethren, but the ministers of the devil filled them with tares; taking away some things and adding others; for whom wo is reserved."⁶

That the "Hypotyposes" of Clement of Alexandria were thus corrupted can hardly be doubted by any one who reads the account given of them by Photius, who himself supposes it to have been the case.⁷

On this ground, as is well-known, Ruffinus endeavours to defend the writings of Origen, viz. that they had been grievously corrupted by heretics, an apology however which Jerome would

¹ Quibus jam olim ab his qui a fide aliena sentiunt adulterina quædam et a pietate aliena introducta sunt, quæ divinorum nobis decretorum elegantem ac decoram speciem obscurarunt. Can. 2.

² Ap. Hieron. in Contr. Ruff. lib. ii. § 17. tom. ii. col. 507.

³ Bibl. ed. Hoerschel p. 155 et seq.

⁴ Adv. hæ. in hæ. 30. vol. i. p. 139.

⁵ On writings of Tertullian, p. 90. note.

⁶ Ἐπιστολαὶ γὰρ αἰσῶρον ἐξιστάντων με γραφαὶ συρραφαί, καὶ ταύτας οἱ τοῦ διαβόλου ἀποστολοὶ ἐξέλιπον γεγραμμένα. α μὲν ἐξαίρουστές, α δὲ προστίθεντες ὡς τοὺς οὐκ ἔσται. EUSEB. Hist. Eccl. iv. 23.

⁷ Phot Biblioth. cod. 109. ed. Hoerschel. p. 154.

not receive, and therefore we will only refer the reader to the contest between Jerome and Ruffinus on this point, where he will also meet with many observations illustrative of this subject.¹ And it is somewhat remarkable that so little was Jerome acquainted with the fact, now contended for, of catholic consent among all the writers of the early church on all important points, that (rejecting the supposition so convenient for such an hypothesis that, wherever they had spoken incorrectly, their writings had been falsified by the heretics) he does not scruple to say,—“It may happen that either they absolutely erred, or wrote with another meaning, or their writings were by degrees corrupted by unskillful copyists. Or, at any rate, before the rise of that meridian *dæmon* Arius in Alexandria, they spoke some things innocently and incautiously.”²

One thing, however, seems quite certain, and that is, that the Latin translations of the Greek Fathers, by Ruffinus, are not to be trusted. He is clearly convicted by Jerome, of having both published the first book of Eusebius' six books of the defence of Origen, under the name of Pamphilus the Martyr, in order to obtain greater respect for it, and of having altered the sense of various passages, so as to make them speak the language of the Nicene Creed.³ I say clearly convicted, for Ruffinus, in his reply, does not attempt to deny it. He is charged with doing the same in his translations of the works of Origen, in order to make them consonant with the orthodox faith, and as far the greater part of what we possess of Origen's works remains to us only in his translations, we have but little of Origen that we can at all depend upon. The translations of Ruffinus are given up by all parties as wholly unworthy of credit.⁴ Such adulterations of the works of the Fathers, therefore, were not all on the side of the heretics.

Another instance is recorded by Cyril of Alexandria, in the case of the epistle of Athanasius to Epictetus, Bishop of Corinth. Writing to John of Antioch, Cyril remarks,—“Having learnt that some have published in an adulterated form the epistle of our illustrious Father Athanasius to the blessed Epictetus, so that many may be injured thereby, we have thought it useful and necessary to the brethren to send your holiness a transcript from some antient and incorrupt copies that are preserved by us.”⁵

¹ See Hieron. libr. contra Ruffin. and Ruffin. Apol. apud Hieron. Opera.

² Fieri enim potest, ut vel simpliciter erraverint, vel alio sensu scripserint, vel a librariis imperitiis eorum paulatim scripta corrupta sint. Vel certe antequam in Alexandria quasi *dæmonium* meridianum Arius nasceretur, innocenter quædam et minus caute loquuti sunt. Hieron. Contr. Ruff. lib. ii. § 17, tom. ii. col. 508, 9.

³ See Hieron. Contr. Ruffin. lib. i. § 8—10, and lib. iii. § 12.

⁴ See Huetii Origen. lib. iii. c. 1, § 3, et passim, and Cave, sub nom. *Ruffinus*.

⁵ Επειδὴ δὲ μακάριον, ὅτι καὶ τῇ πρὸς τοῦ μακαρίου Ἐπικτητοῦ ἐπιστολῇ τοῦ πνευματικοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀθανασίου, ὁρθοῦς ἐχρυσται, παραρτῶν αὐτῇ τῆς ἀντιγραφῆς, ὡς ἠντι-

And again, to Acacius he writes,—¹ Paul, Bishop of Emisa, asked me very earnestly whether I assent to what was written by our celebrated and most blessed Father Athanasius to Epictetus, Bishop of Corinth. I replied, 'If you have the epistle in an uncorrupt state (for many things in it have been falsified by the enemies of the truth,) I assent to it altogether, and in every point.' He replied that he had the epistle, and would be glad to be assured by my copies, and ascertain whether his own copies were corrupted or not. And having taken the antient copies, and compared them with those he had brought, he found that his were adulterated, and advised me to make transcripts from our copies, and send them to the church at Antioch, which also was done.² He repeats this statement in his first and second letters to Succensus, in the former attributing the corruption to the followers of Nestorius.³

In the second of these letters to Succensus also, he cautions him that if any carried about a letter purporting to be written by that most pious presbyter of the Church of Rome, Philip, and intimating that the most holy Bishop Xystus was grieved at the deposition of Nestorius and assisted him, he was not to believe it, or if a letter was brought to him, purporting to be written by himself, (namely Cyril,) and intimating his regret at what he had done at Ephesus, he was only to laugh at it:⁴ which evidently shows that such letters were being then circulated.

That the works of Cyril were corrupted after his death we have several testimonies. Dioscorus, his successor in the See of Alexandria, is accused of having adulterated them by Leontius of Byzantium.⁵ So Nicephorus Callistus tells us that Ælurus, who forced himself into the See of Alexandria in the times of the Emperor Leo, "is said to have corrupted many of the writings of the divine Cyril, not published abroad, and to have inserted in them false doctrines."⁶ The same is intimated, as we have

ὅτι ἀδικεῖσθαι πολλοὺς, διὰ τοῦτο χρησίμῳ τι καὶ ἀναγκαῖον ἐπιδείκνυται τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, ἔξ ἀντιγραφῶν ἀρχαίων, τῶν παρ' ἡμῶν, καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἐχούτων, ἀπιστοῦμαι μὲν τὰ ἴσα τῇ ἐν ὁσιότητι. Epist. ad Johann. Antioch. Op. tom. v. Part. 2. Inter Epist. p. 109.

¹ Ἐπισκοπὸς Παῦλος τῆς Ἐμισᾶς . . . δεικνύσαντο μοι, καὶ μαλὰ ἐσπουδασμῶς, καὶ συνελθόντες τὰς γραφαὶς παρὰ τοῦ τῆς ἀσκήμου μητρὸς καὶ τρισεκαπταίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀθανασίου πρὸς Ἐπικτήτου ἐπισκόπου τῆς Κορίνθου. Ἐγὼ δὲ ἐπὶ ὅτι, καὶ σκεῖται παρ' ἡμῶν οὐ πωδωμένην τὸ ῥοσάμμα παραπύκνεται γὰρ τὸν αὐτὸν πολλὰ παρὰ τὸν πῶν ἀληθῶς ἐχθρὸν συνάψαι μὲν αὐτῶν τι καὶ παρ' αὐτῶν. Ὅ δὲ πρὸς τοῦτο ἐφασκεν, ἔχον μὴ καὶ αὐτὸς τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, βουλοσθῆναι δι' καὶ αὐτὸν παρ' ἡμῶν ἀντιγραφῶν πληροφορηθῆναι, καὶ μαθεῖν, ποτὶ ποτὶ τὰ αὐτὸν βιβλία παραπύκνεται, ἢ μὴ. Καὶ δὲ καὶ λαβὼν ἀντιγραφεὶς παλαιὰ, καὶ ὡς ἐπεμύρετο συμβάλλων, ἔκρινεν ταῦτα πωδωμένα, καὶ προτίθηεν αὐτῶν παρ' ἡμῶν βιβλία ἴσα ποιῶσαι, πῶν-τῃ τε τῇ Ἀντιόχειαν μελλομένη ὁ δὲ καὶ γέγονε. Epist. ad Acacium Melitanens. episc. tom. v. part. 2. Inter Ep. p. 120.

² Ib. pp. 140 and 151.

³ Ib. p. 151.

⁴ De Sectis Act. 8. fn.

⁵ Διόρισται μὴ πολλὰ τούτων ὄντα τῷ Αἰλῶρι τῶν συγγραμμάτων τοῦ θεοῦ Κυρίλλου μητρὸς μετὰ λατῶν μελῶν, διαλυμένων, τοῦτα τοῦτοις ἐπιστάμας δογμάτα. Hist. Eccl. lib. xv. c. 16.

already observed, by Anastasius Sinaita ;¹ who also gives an instance of such corruption as occurring in the first Epistle to Succensus, where the words being *δυ τας φουρις ιμαι φαρμ*, they had been in most copies altered, and he tells us, that in only one copy shown him by the Librarian at Alexandria, did he find the correct reading, the rest being all altered ; some reading *δυ φουρις ιμασθαι φαρμ*, others, *δυ τας φουρις ιμοιισθαι φαρμ*. Consequently, it may be doubted whether our reading in the present day, which is, *δυ τας φουρις ιμαι φαρμ τας ιουδαιας*,² is the genuine reading, and if so, we have here an instance how easily we may be deceived in such a matter.

The same Anastasius mentions a corruption in the works of Ambrose, where, for, "let us observe the difference of the divinity and the flesh," had been substituted, "let us observe the difference of the reading."³ The passage as we now have it in the works of Ambrose, presents us with the true reading.⁴

In the sixth Council, Macarius and his colleagues were convicted not only of corrupting the testimonies they brought from the Fathers,⁵ but also of circulating corrupt copies of the Acts of the fifth Council.⁶

And these forgeries appear to have been committed sometimes upon a large scale. Witness the book of Basil on the Holy Spirit, where it is justly suspected that the latter part, and that more than half of the whole, has been added by another. This was first noticed by Erasmus, and in his judgment our two learned prelates Jeremy Taylor and Stillingfleet fully coincide, the former stating that the last fifteen chapters "were *plainly* added by another hand,"⁷ and the latter, that besides the evidence from the connexion and style of the parts, so we must suppose it to be if we think that St. Basil "would not utter palpable and evident contradictions in his writings," his testimony here respecting traditions being totally contradictory to several passages in his acknowledged works.⁸ And this judgment is further confirmed by the learned Robert Cooke.⁹ And as Bishop Stillingfleet justly observes, "Erasmus was not the first who suspected corruption in St. Basil's writings. For Marcus Ephesius in the Florentine

¹ See p. 164 above.

² See Cyril. Op. ed. Aubert. tom. v. Part 2. Inter Epist. p. 137. E.

³ Αρτι του, φυλαξωμεν τη διαφορα της θεοτητας και της σαρκος, φυλαξωμεν τη διαφορα της αναγνωσεως. Anast. Sinait. Vim dux, c. 10. p. 200.

⁴ Servemus distinctionem divinitatis et carnis. Ambros. De fide, lib. ii. c. 9. n. 77. tom. ii. col. 485.

⁵ Concil. Sext. Act. 8 and 9.

⁶ Ib. Act. 14.

⁷ Lib. of proph. § 8.

⁸ Rational Account, &c. ed. 1665, pp. 243, 4.

⁹ Censura Quorundam Scriptorum. Lond. 1614, 4to. pp. 120 et seq.

Council, (Act. 20.) charged some Latinizing Greeks with corrupting his books against Eunomius, protesting that in Constantinople there were but four copies to above one thousand which had the passages in them which were produced by the Latins."¹

Other instances might easily be adduced.² And against the corruptions of antient times we have scarcely any defence, except that which is founded upon criticism and conjecture, grounds far too insecure to build faith upon.

Nor must we omit to observe that these antient corrupters of the Fathers have had their imitators in later times, whose frauds, though certainly more open to detection by us than those of antient times, have not always been easy to be discovered.

I will not here enter upon the various charges mutually made against each other by the Greeks and Latins of corrupting the Fathers to speak their sense,³ except to notice that not even the Creed has escaped; witness the dispute as to the phrase "*filioque*" of such importance in the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Ghost which the Greeks charged the Latins with adding, and the Latins charged the Greeks with abstracting, so that, be it as it may, on one side or the other a fraud has been committed.

But I will rather notice the performances of the Romanists of this kind, which may seem more especially to affect us.

Their corruption of St. Cyprian's treatise "On the unity of the church," in the edition by Manutius published at Rome in 1564, under the sanction of the Pope, and afterwards followed by Pamelius, is so well known, that I need hardly dwell long upon it here. It is fully stated by James in his work on this subject,⁴ and is thus briefly noticed by Bishop Taylor; "The third chapter of St. Cyprian's book 'On the Unity of the Church,' in the edition of Pamelius, suffered great alteration. These words, *primatus Petro datur*, 'the primacy is given to St. Peter,' wholly inserted; and these, *super cathedram Petri fundata est ecclesia*, 'the church is founded upon the chair of St. Peter:' and whereas it was before, *super unum ædificat ecclesiam Christus*, 'Christ builds his church upon one,' that not being enough, they have made it, *super illum unum*, 'upon that one.' Now these additions are against the faith of all old copies before Manutius and Pamelius, and against Gratian, even after himself had been chastised by the Roman correctors, the commissaries of Gregory XIII. as is to be seen where these words are alleged, Decret. c. 24. q. 1. can. Loquitur Dominus ad Petrum. So that we may say of

¹ Rational Account, &c. p. 243.

² Several are mentioned by Daille, On the true use of the Fathers, Part 1. c. 4.

³ See particularly the discussions in the Council of Florence.

⁴ Treatise of the Corruption of Scripture, Councils, and Fathers, by the Prelates, &c. of the Church of Rome, Part 2. pp. 113—160. ed. 1698.

Cyprian's works, as Pamelius himself said concerning his writings and the writings of others of the Fathers; saith he, 'Whence we gather that the writings of Cyprian and others of the Fathers are in various ways corrupted by the transcribers.' (Cypriani scripta ut et aliorum Veterum a librariis varie fuisse interpolata. Annot. in Cypr. super Concil. Carthag. n. l.)"¹

In the same place, the bishop after James' notices a similar corruption introduced by Gratian, where quoting that passage of Ambrose, "They do not hold the inheritance of Peter who have not the *faith* of Peter," (non habent Petri hæreditatem qui non habent Petri fidem), he quotes it as, "They do not hold the inheritance of Peter who hold not the *seat* of Peter" (for *fidem* substituting *sedem*).

So again, in that passage of Augustine, "In reckoning the canonical Scriptures, let a man follow the authority of the greatest number of catholic churches, among which truly are those which deserved both to have the seats of the Apostles, and to receive their Epistles,"² the latter part is quoted by Gratian in the Canon Law as, "among which Scriptures those Epistles are which the Apostolic See hath, and others have deserved to receive from her;"³ and to this is prefixed the title, "The decretal Epistles are reckoned among the Canonical Scriptures,"⁴ to lead the reader to suppose that Augustine refers in these words to the Decretal Epistles of the Popes.⁵

In such corruptions, however, none seem to have outdone Pamelius. We have already noticed those which are to be found in Cyprian's Treatise, "On the Unity of the Church," in his edition. Another instance occurs in Cyprian's Tract, "On the Advantage of Patience," where, for the words, *after the reception of the eucharist* (post *gustatam* eucharistiam) we find, *after the carrying about of the eucharist* (post *gestatam* eucharistiam) to maintain the Romish custom of the circumgestion of the eucharist.⁷ So in his fortieth Epistle of this edition, we have *petram* the rock, changed into *Petrum*, Peter. And though the Epistle of Firmilian is admitted on account of its having been already published, so that it was of no use to try to suppress it, Pamelius very candidly admits that he wishes it had never been

¹ Liberty of prophes. § 8. fn.

² Corruption of SS. &c. Part 2. n. 23. p. 222. ed. 1688.

³ In canonicis autem Scripturis Ecclesiarum catholicarum quamplurimum auctoritatem sequatur, inter quas sane illæ sunt quæ apostolicas sedes habere et Epistolas accipere meruerunt. De Doct. Christiana, lib. ii. c. 8.

⁴ Inter quas sane illæ sunt quæ Apostolica sedes habere et ab ea alii meruerunt accipere epistolas. Decret. Pt. i. dist. 19. In Canon. 6.

⁵ Inter canonicas Scripturas Decretales Epistolæ connumerantur.

⁶ James's Corruption, &c. Part 2. n. 7. p. 185.

⁷ James, ib. p. 239.

published, and that probably Manutius intentionally omitted it in his edition of Cyprian.¹ And certainly Romanists are not likely to be much gratified with an Epistle written in the *third* century, in which it is stated that, "Anybody may know that those at Rome do not in all things observe those things that were delivered from the beginning, and vainly pretend apostolical authority."²

Another remarkable instance occurs in Tertullian, where, until Rigaltius had the honesty to give the passage as he found it in the MSS., an important testimony was altogether lost through the falsification introduced into it. The passage occurs in his "Exhortation to Chastity," where, according to the reading given by Rigaltius from the MSS., we read, "Where there is no assembly of the ecclesiastical order, you [speaking to a layman] both offer [i. e. in the eucharist] and baptize, and are alone a priest to yourself;" which passage has been corrupted into the following,—“Where there is an assembly of the ecclesiastical order, the priest, who is there alone, both offers and baptizes,” which is altogether incongruous with the context, and turns the whole passage into nonsense; but it was preferable to make Tertullian speak nonsense, than utter such a testimony as his real words give us. To the testimony supplied in these words we shall have occasion to advert hereafter.

In the Roman editions of the Fathers by Manutius, various instances of the same kind might be pointed out. What, indeed, could be expected from one who professes to have received a charge from the Pope to print them “so corrected that there may be no error remaining, which, by holding out the appearance of false doctrine, can influence the minds of the simple”?³ It was his duty to print them as he found them; instead of which, he makes a boast of suppressing all which was reckoned at Rome

¹ Fortassis consultius foret, nunquam editam fuisse hanc epistolam, ita ut putem consulto illam omisisse Manutium. Argum. ad epist. 75. These two cases are noticed by Daille, lib. i. c. 4.

² Eos autem qui Romæ sunt non ea in omnibus observare quæ sint ab origine tradita et frustra Apostolorum auctoritatem prætere, scire quis etiam inde potest, quod circa celebrandos dies paschæ et circa multa alia divinæ rei sacramenta videat esse apud illos aliquas diversitates, nec observari illic omnia æqualiter quæ Hierosolymis observantur.

³ Ubi Ecclesiastici Ordinis non est consensus et offers et tinguis et sacerdos es tibi solus. De exhort. cast. c. 7. p. 522. ed. 1664.

⁴ Ubi Ecclesiastici Ordinis est consensus, et offert et tinguit sacerdos qui est ibi solus. See the editions of Pamelius. I quote from that of Col. Agripp. 1617. To whom the corruption may be due it is impossible precisely to say, but Pamelius, in his note, admits that he struck out the “non.”

⁵ Sic emendati, ne qua supersit labes quæ imperitorum animos objecta falsæ doctrinæ specie possit inficere. Manutii Pref. ad Plin. 4m. in lib. Poli De Concil.

false doctrine. It was in conformity, I suppose, with these directions, that he left out, as Pamelius tells us, the letter of Firmilian to Cyprian, and introduced the corruptions we have already noticed in his edition of Cyprian's treatise "On the Unity of the Church." Well may the Romanists, with such editors, boast of having all the Fathers on their side.

Another of his "emendations," occurring in the works of Gregory, is thus noted by Dr. James. The genuine passage is this, "All things that were foretold are come to pass. The king of pride is near; and (which is a wickedness to name) *a whole host of priests is provided to attend his coming.* (Sacerdotum ei præparatur exercitus.) For they also march with as proud a countenance as he, which were appointed to be examples of meekness and humility to others."¹ "The Roman edition with sundry others," says Dr. James, "read most absurdly, contrary to the faith of the MSS. and the circumstance of the place, *sacerdotum est præparatus exitus.*" "The king of pride is near. And (which is a wickedness to name) *when he comes the priests shall be executed and put to death.*" "Whereas," says Dr. James, "the word *militant, do march*, in the next words, makes the matter clear on our side against them. For if they were put to death, how should they walk up and down? unless they did as St. Denis is said to have done, that carried his head in his hand; and yet methinks a more modest gait than Gregory speaks of should have become them. Add hereunto that the epistle is written to tax the pride of a bishop (John of Constantinople, which took upon him the title of universal bishop) and not of a king, of the clergy and not of the laity. Lastly, to make the matter sure, all the MSS. that I could yet procure or get into my hands, (that is *seven* MSS.) do read *exercitus* and not *exitus.*" And he adds that, for "citing these words truly," Bishop Jewell had been "traduced and slandered among the Papists," as one who had misquoted Gregory to serve his purpose;² a very apt specimen of Popish dealings, first to publish corrupted editions of the Fathers themselves, and then charge others with misquoting them, if they swerve from that corrupted text. One thing more we may observe from the genuine passage of Gregory; namely, that he held the assumption of the title of universal bishop to be a mark of antichrist. Would that his successors had been of his mind.

Another instance, apparently, of such corruptions, and one which remains in the Popish editions to this day, occurs in the

¹ Omnia quæ prædicta sunt, fiunt. Rex superbis, prope est; et, quod dici nefas est, sacerdotum ei præparatur exercitus; quia cervici militantis elationis qui positi fuerant ut ducatum præberent humilitatis. Greg. Magn. Epist. lib. 4. Ind. 13. Ep. 38. as quoted by James. Ed. Ben. lib. v. Ind. 13. Ep. 18.

² James's Corruption, &c. Part 2. n. 26, pp. 230 et seq.

works of Augustine, in a passage much quoted by the Romanists in support of their notions of tradition. Augustine, speaking of baptism, says, according to the reading of three MSS. at Oxford,¹—"The custom of our mother the church in baptizing infants is not to be despised, nor by any means to be thought superfluous, nor at all to be believed to be anything but an apostolic tradition."² And this agrees with what he says elsewhere on this subject, where, speaking of infant baptism as having been always practised in the church, he says, "That which the universal church holds, and was not instituted by councils, but has always been retained, is most rightly believed to have been delivered by no other than apostolical authority."³ How far this rule is admissible, is a question into which I do not here enter. But the meaning of Augustine in both these passages is clear. The former passage, however, has been corrupted by the Romanists, by the addition of a letter to one word, into this; "The custom of our mother the church in baptizing infants is not to be despised, nor by any means to be thought superfluous, nor at all to be believed, *were it not an apostolical tradition.*"⁴ And so it remains to this day in the *Benedictine edition*, without even the slightest intimation of the MSS. having any other reading. And hence the passage is quoted by Romish controversialists, as showing that in Augustine's opinion, infant baptism ought not to be believed at all but for tradition, and therefore could not be proved from Scripture,⁵ which is clearly contrary to Augustine's own remarks elsewhere; and so this passage was to stand as a proof that for some points of the highest importance we must go to tradition, and cannot get any sufficient proof from Scripture.⁶

Again; the following passage of Œcumenius has been alto-

¹ James's Corruption, &c. Pt. 2. n. 4. pp. 177 et seq.

² Consuetudo matris ecclesie in baptizandis parvulis nequaquam spernenda est, neque ullo modo superflua deputanda, nec omnino credenda nisi apostolica esse traditio. De Genes. ad lit. lib. 10. c. 23.

³ Quod universa tenet ecclesia, nec conciliis institutum, sed semper retentum est, non nisi auctoritate apostolica traditum rectissime creditur. De bapt. contr. Donat. lib. 4. c. 23.

⁴ Consuetudo matris ecclesie, &c. (as above) . . . nec omnino credenda nisi apostolica esset traditio.

⁵ As by the Rhemists in their notes on 2 Thess. ii. 15, and the author of The grounds of the old religion and the new, (see James, p. 180,) and by the answerer of Archbishop Laud. (See Stillingfleet's rational account, &c. p. 108.)

⁶ See James, ib. This corruption was first suspected by Bishop Bilson, partly by the course of the sentence, and partly by a comparison with other places, and upon referring to the MSS. Dr. James ascertained that the suspicion was well founded. How is it that these valuable MSS. of the Fathers have been so little used, and that we have been left by the possessors of them, though with a "Clarendon Press" at hand, to the tender mercies of Romish editors for almost all the editions of the Fathers we possess?

gether omitted in the printed editions: "For those who favour the Law introduced even the worship of angels, because through them the Law was given; and this custom remained in Phrygia, so that the Council of Laodicea made a decree, prohibiting the making addresses and praying to angels;¹ whence also there were many temples among them erected to the archangel Michael."² This passage David Hoeschelius, in his notes on the work of Origen against Celsus, testifies that he himself had seen in the MSS. of Œcumenius.³

Nay, they are not contented with leaving obnoxious passages out of their printed copies, but will even blot them out of the MSS. where they have the opportunity. Thus, when that famous passage in the "Imperfect work on Matthew," attributed to Chrysostom, in which it is said—that there should come a time when the church being corrupted, men should be utterly unable to find the true church but by the Scriptures, and should perish if they took anything else for their guide,—is urged against Bellarmine, he very coolly replies that that whole passage had evidently been inserted by the Arians, and *had been removed from some MSS. that had been LATELY corrected.*⁴ And accordingly in the edition printed at Paris, 1557, Svo. it is altogether omitted.⁵

Fifty examples of this kind are noticed by Dr. James,⁶ to which he tells us he might have added hundreds more.

Their forgeries and falsifications in the acts and canons of the early Councils, have been largely investigated by Dr. Comber.⁷ And these forgeries, we must observe, are not all the produce of modern times, but commenced as early as the ambition of the Roman Pontiffs for universal dominion in the church; insomuch that even at the Council of Chalcedon in the fifth century, the Pope's Legate cited the sixth canon of Nice as containing the words, "The Church of Rome hath always had the primacy," the falsehood of which was showed by the Constantinopolitan

¹ See Concil. Laod. Can. 35. Cod. Can. Eccl. Univ. Can. 139.

² Οἱ γὰρ τῶ νομῶ συναγοῦντες καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους εὐχὰν ποιῶντες, ὅτι δι' αὐτοὺς καὶ ὁ νομὸς εἰσῆλθε. Ἐμὲν δὲ τοῦτο κατὰ Φρυγίαν τὸ εἶναι, ὡς καὶ τῇ ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ συνόδῳ νομὸν παύσαι τοὺς προσεὶν ἀγγέλους καὶ προσκυνεῖν. Ἀρ' οὐ καὶ ναὶ παρ' αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἀρχιπρωτεύου Μιχαὴλ πολλοί.

³ See Daille, lib. i. c. 4.

⁴ Totus hic locus tanquam ab Arianis insertus a quibusdam codicibus nuper emendatus sublatus est. Bellarm. De Verb. Dei, lib. iv. c. 11.

⁵ See James, Pt. 2. n. 2, pp. 161 et seq. And see somewhat similar instances mentioned, ib. n. 12. pp. 195. et seq. and n. 13. pp. 198 et seq.

⁶ Corruption of Scripture and Fathers, &c. Part 2. pp. 113 et seq.

⁷ Roman Forgeries in the Councils. Part 1. Lond. 1689. 4to. Part 2. Lond. 1695. 4to. Many are also mentioned by Daille, On the true use of the Fathers. Pt. 1. c. 4; and in the "Historical Examination of the authority of General Councils."

Code then produced.¹ A pregnant instance this, surely, of the dangers to which such documents have been exposed, in their passage through the Roman Church to our hands.

There is not, in fact, an edition of the Councils in which there are not, Bishop Barlow says, "spurious canons and decretal epistles of ancient Popes put in, and genuine canons left out or corrupted."² To all which we must add the well-known mutual accusations of the Greeks and Latins against each other of direct forgeries and sweeping suppressions and alterations in the decrees and canons of the various Councils, even from the first great Council at Nice, which leaves us in still greater uncertainty in the matter.

Nay, more, they have not hesitated openly to profess to *correct* the writings of the Fathers, where they have spoken erroneously. Dr. James refers to two Expurgatory Indexes³ where certain sentences or words in the text of Gregory Nyssen, Chrysostom, Anastasius, Eucherius, Procopius, Agapetus, and Didymus Alexandrinus, "against idolatry, satisfactions, Peter's primacy, and for the supremacy of temporal kings and princes," are ordered to be erased; and testifies to having seen a copy of Chrysostom, in which "divers sentences" had been blotted out by the Inquisitors.⁴

And so that the famous work of Bertram on the Eucharist, is in some Indexes altogether forbidden;⁵ and in others expurgated of the part which opposes Romish errors.⁶

And this practice is openly defended by the Jesuit Gretser, in his treatise on the subject,⁷ where he maintains that though "the sayings of the Fathers, as they are Fathers, need no purging;" yet that, "being considered as sons, their words may be corrected and censured by the church."⁸

Such are the principles and practices of those through whom principally we have received the works of the Fathers.

These examples very clearly show the extensive and systematic corruption to which the writings of the Fathers have been subjected by the Romanists; a corruption, of which the detection, in a few cases, such as those given above, can afford but a very inadequate idea, considering the opportunities they have enjoyed.

¹ See Cencil. Chalced. Atc. 16.; and Comber's Rom. Forg. p. 93.

² Directions for choice of books, &c. p. 32. A remarkable instance is mentioned by Dr. James in his Corruption of SS. and Fathers. Pt. 2. n. 38. pp. 250 et seq.

³ Madrit. 1584. 4to. Rom 1607. 8vo.

⁴ Corruption, &c. Part 4. pp. 410, 11.

⁵ As in that published at Rome, 1559. 4to.

⁶ As in the Index. Belg. Antw. 1571. 4to.

⁷ De jure et more prohib.

⁸ James ib. p. 412. Where he adds some remarks well worth consideration, on the early Roman editions of the Fathers.

Now it is quite true that it would be wrong to infer, from these facts, that we have no remains of antiquity that we can depend upon. But, at the same time, they do undoubtedly show us the necessity of caution with respect to those writings that come to us under that name. They necessarily weaken the argument derived from those writings in favour of any doctrines, and take away that certainty that is necessary to make them authoritative witnesses. Their statements, though useful as a guide in the interpretation of Scripture, and as a check upon the extravagance of private interpretation, are not such as can be made binding upon the conscience. Would it not be absurd to call our common-places, gathered from these writings, a "practically infallible" testimony of the oral tradition of the Apostles?

We are not called upon, then, be it observed, to determine whether, *in an abstract view*, a society like the church could be a safe depositary for the oral teaching of its founders, whether the state of the church might have been such, and the records testifying of the oral tradition of the Apostles so abundant and well preserved, as to ensure the safe conveyance of that tradition to succeeding ages. We must look to *facts*; and facts show that the state of the church and its records has not been such as to make them trustworthy witnesses of oral Apostolical tradition.

That the reader may not suppose that I am pressing this argument beyond what the great divines of our own church would sanction, I would here call his attention to what our opponents' own witness, Bishop Jer. Taylor, has said on this subject. "There are some," he says, "who think they can determine all questions in the world by two or three sayings of the Fathers, or by the *consent of so many as they will please to call a concurrent testimony*. But this consideration will soon be at an end." And then having produced various objections to such a notion, he thus proceeds,—"*But I will rather choose to show the uncertainty of this topic, by such an argument which was not in the Fathers' power to help; such as makes no invasion upon their great reputation, which I desire should be preserved as sacred as it ought. For other things, let who please read M. Daille 'On the true use of the Fathers;' but I shall only consider that the writings of the Fathers have been so corrupted by the intermixture of heretics, so many false books put forth in their names, so many of their writings lost which would more clearly have explicated their sense, and at last an open profession made and a trade of making the Fathers speak, not what themselves thought, but what other men pleased, that it is a great instance of God's providence, and care of his church, that we have so much good preserved in the writings which we receive from the Fathers; and that all truth is not as clear gone as is the certainty of*

their great authority and reputation." And having given various instances, as of the epistle written to Constantine by the Arians, under the name of Athanasius, and a work written by the Eutychians against Cyril of Alexandria, under the name of Theodoret, and of the chapters added, as he maintains with Erasmus, to the work of Basil on the Holy Spirit; and the testimony of Erasmus that, in the eighth century, "books, under the assumed name of illustrious men, were everywhere to be met with," he adds, "Indeed the whole world hath been so much abused, that every man thinks he hath reason to suspect whatsoever is against him; that is, what he please; which proceeding only produces this truth, that there neither is nor can be any certainty, nor very much probability, in such allegations.

"But," he proceeds, "there is a worse mischief than this, besides those very many which are not yet discovered, which, like the pestilence, destroys in the dark, and grows into inconvenience more insensibly and more irremediably; and that is, corruption of particular places, by inserting words and altering them to contrary senses." And having given several examples, the principal of which will be found more fully stated among those we have given above, he adds,—"But that the *Indices Expurgatorii*, commanded by authority, and practised with public license, profess to alter and correct the sayings of the Fathers, and to reconcile them to the catholic sense, by putting in and leaving out, is so great an imposture, so unchristian a proceeding, that it hath made the faith of all books and all authors justly to be suspected. For considering their infinite diligence and great opportunity, as having had most of the copies in their own hands, together with an unsatisfiable desire of prevailing in their right, or in their wrong, they have made *an absolute destruction of this topic*; and when the Fathers speak Latin, or breathe in a Roman diocese, although the providence of God does infinitely overrule them, and that it is *next to a miracle* that in the monuments of antiquity there is no more found that can pretend for their advantage than there is, which indeed is infinitely inconsiderable, yet our questions and uncertainties are infinitely multiplied, instead of a probable and reasonable determination. For since the Latins always complained of the Greeks for privately corrupting the antient records both of councils and fathers, and now the Latins make open profession not of corrupting but of *correcting* their writings (that is the word), and *at the most it was but a human authority*, and that of persons not always learned, and very often deceived, THE WHOLE MATTER IS SO UNREASONABLE, THAT IT IS NOT WORTH A FURTHER DISQUISITION."¹

¹ Lib. of Prophes. § 8.

SECTION IV.—THE WITNESS OF PATRISTICAL TRADITION, EVEN IN THE WRITINGS THAT HAVE BEEN PRESERVED, IS OF A DISCORDANT KIND, AND THAT EVEN IN FUNDAMENTAL POINTS.

WE have already shown, that even the consent of the few writers whose remains we possess of the primitive church, could not be taken as any just representation of the doctrine of the whole church of that period, and therefore certainly as no divine informant or certain record of the oral teaching of the Apostles.

But thus much we are perfectly ready to admit, that if we take the writings of the first five or six centuries, considering the character of thier authors and their extent, it is not likely that the orthodox faith, in all fundamental points, should not be contained therein. Consequently, the consent of those writings, upon any point admitted to be a fundamental article, would in all probability, represent the true faith. I say *admitted to be a fundamental article*, because if it be a question whether it be a fundamental article or not, then it is also a question what is the value of such consent. And I know of nothing but Scripture that can determine what the fundamental articles are. Moreover, it must really be the *consent* of those writings. It is not sufficient to say four or five have given their testimony in its favour, and the rest are silent. For this destroys the very groundwork upon which the argument is built, namely, that such and so many authors are not likely to have all erred in fundamentals. But four or five, or more, among them, may have erred.

Nay more, I admit fully that our church has (wisely, in my humble view) sanctioned the principle, that nothing is to be admitted as a fundamental point of faith that has not some support in the patristical testimony of the first five or six centuries; a rule which (especially at the time when it was first made) was a prudent precaution against the novelties of enthusiasm and Popery; and hence it was that Bishop Taylor said, that the Church of England "ties her doctors as much as the Council of Trent does to expound Scriptures according to the sense of the antient fathers."¹ And this quotation reminds me of a very important erratum in Mr. Keble,² who, quoting this passage from Bishop Taylor, (inadvertently, no doubt, but still somewhat extraordinarily) substitutes for "*sense*," "*consent*," thereby making Bishop Taylor seem to intimate that "*consent*" is to be found in the Fathers, directly opposite to his own express determination to the contrary, both in a previous work,³ and also in the context

¹ Diss. from Popery, Pt. ii. Introduction. Works, vol. x. p. 332.

² App. to Sermon, p. 149.

³ Liberty of Prophecy, § 8.

of this very passage.¹ True, it would follow from what he says, that the consent of the writings of this period in a fundamental point is not to be controverted by us *where it can be found*, but that is vastly different to asserting that there is such consent. The latter would make the Fathers a very clear guide in such points, while the fact is, that they are a very obscure one from their contradictions.

Further; on what ground is it that our church has given them this authority? Clearly because, on inspection and comparison with Scripture, they were considered to be, taking them as a body, in possession of the truth, that is, that the true faith was contained in their writings. "The Protestants," says Dr. Waterland, "having *well studied the Fathers*, were now willing to rest their cause not upon Scripture only, but Fathers too; so far at least as the *three first centuries*. *And they thought that a much greater difference was due to the judgment of those early ages of the church than to that of the ages succeeding, while the Romanists were used to value the latter equally with the former, or even to give them the preference.*"²

When the Protestants referred to the Fathers as judges of the disputes between them and the Romanists, this was not from their holding their witness to be *authoritative* in the matter, but from their finding that such an appeal might safely be made, and on the natural supposition that it would be the most influential with those who professed to guide themselves by that witness.

We allow, then, that the consent of the Fathers whose remains we possess of the first five or six centuries, would be a most stringent argument in favour of any doctrine on a fundamental point; and admit readily that the principle sanctioned by our church of requiring *some* patristical testimony in favour of any doctrine put forward as fundamental, would make such consent, (not from any *intrinsic* authority, but from the acknowledgment of our church as to these writings,) a conclusive argument that it was the doctrine of our church.

We will now proceed, then, to inquire further, whether such consent is to be found.

Among the writers of the first three centuries are three individuals, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen, who have left us a brief summary of the Christian faith, for which they claim the consentient testimony of all the churches founded by the Apostles. These summaries, then, have clearly the best claim of any-

¹ Ib. p. 324.

² Second Vindication of Christ's Divinity, Pref. p. xvii. Works, vol. iii. See also Stillingeet's Council of Trent examined, p. 24, quoted p. 137 above, and other testimonies in c. 11 below.

thing in antiquity to be considered the representatives of the catholic consent of the primitive church, and as agreeable to the teaching of the Apostles, and beyond doubt are entitled to very great respect. I shall, therefore, begin with them. The summaries of Irenæus and Tertullian have been already given, but for the convenience of the reader I will here repeat them, and subjoin that of Origen.

The following is given by Irenæus as "the faith preached by the church."

"The church, though scattered over all the world from one end of the earth to the other, received from the Apostles and their disciples the belief in one God the Father Almighty, who made the heaven and the earth, and the seas, and all things that are in them; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who preached by the Prophets, the Dispensations, and the Advents, and the birth by a virgin, and the passion and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven, of the beloved Jesus Christ our Lord, and his advent from heaven in the glory of the Father, to restore all things, and to raise all flesh of all mankind, that to Christ Jesus our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father, every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess to him, and that he may execute just judgment upon all; that he may send the spirits of wickedness, and transgressing and apostate angels, and all impious, and wicked, and lawless, and blasphemous men into everlasting fire; and to the just and holy, and those that have kept his commandments, and remained steadfast in his love, some from the beginning, others after repentance, having given life, may confer on them immortality, and put them in possession of eternal glory."¹

Having occasion again to give a summary of the doctrine of the church, he delivers it in these words, (which he calls "the order or rule of that tradition which the Apostles delivered to those to whom they committed the churches");—

"Believing in one God the maker of heaven and earth and all things which are in them, through Christ Jesus the Son of God; who on account of his extraordinary love for his creature, submitted to be born of a virgin, uniting man to God in his own person, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rising again, and being received in glory, shall come in glory as the Saviour of those who are saved, and the judge of those who are condemned, sending the corrupters of the truth, and the despisers of his Father, and of his advent, into eternal fire."²

¹ IREN. adv. hær. lib. i. c. 10. Mass. c. 2. Grab. See pp. 119, 120, above.

² IREN. adv. hær. iii. c. 3.

The summaries given by Tertullian are as follows :—

(1. "The rule of faith,—that we may now at once state what we believe,—is that by which we believe that there is but one God, and no other beside, the maker of the world, who produced all things out of nothing by his word which he sent forth first of all things. That that word was called his Son, was seen at various times by the Patriarchs under the name of God, was always heard by the Prophets, and at last was brought down by the Spirit and power of God the Father into the Virgin Mary, and made flesh in her womb, and being born of her lived in the person of Jesus Christ; that from that time he preached a new law and a new promise of the kingdom of heaven; that he performed miracles, was crucified, rose again the third day, and being taken up into heaven, sat at the right hand of the Father, and in his stead sent the power of the Holy Spirit to guide believers; and that he shall come with glory to take the saints into the fruition of eternal life, and the heavenly promises, and adjudge the wicked to everlasting fire, having restored to life both the one and the other, and raised their bodies." This rule instituted by Christ raises no disputes among us except such as heresies introduce, or such as make heretics."¹

(2.) Again, elsewhere;—"The rule of faith is but one, alone unchangeable and unreformable; namely, of believing in one God Almighty, the maker of the world, and his Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised the third day from the dead, received in the heavens, and now sitting at the right hand of the Father, who shall come to judge the quick and the dead, by the resurrection of the flesh."²

(3.) Again; "We believe, indeed, one God; but, nevertheless, under this dispensation, which we call œconomy, namely, that there is also a Son of that one God, to wit, his Word, who proceeded from him, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made; that he was sent by the Father into a Virgin, and born of her, man as well as God, the Son of man and the Son of God, and called Jesus Christ; that he suffered, and was dead and buried, according to the Scriptures, and raised again by the Father, and taken back again into the heavens, and now sits at the right hand of the Father, about to come to judge the quick and the dead, from whence also he sent from the Father, according to his promise, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, as the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father and Son and Holy Spirit." And he tells us that "this rule had come down from the beginning of the gospel."³

The summary given by Origen is as follows :—

¹ De Præscr. c. 13.
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² De Virg. Vel. c. 1.

³ Adv. Præx. c. 2.
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"Since, therefore, *many of those who profess to believe in Christ, disagree, not only in small points, and those of no moment, but also in important points, and those of the highest moment; that is, either concerning God, or concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, or concerning the Holy Spirit; and not only concerning these, but also concerning others that are creatures; that is either concerning Dominions, or concerning holy Powers; it seems necessary on that account first to lay down a certain line and clear rule respecting each of these, and then afterwards to discuss other points.* For as, while many among the Greeks and Barbarians promised the truth, we left off seeking it among all those who delivered it according to their own false notions, after that we believed that Christ was the Son of God, and were persuaded that it was to be learnt by us from him; so, since there are many who think that they understand the doctrines of Christ, and some of them may understand them differently from those who preceded them, while, nevertheless, the ecclesiastical doctrine (*prædicatio*) delivered from the Apostles, through the order of succession, and to this day remaining in the churches, may be preserved; that alone is to be believed as the truth, which in no respect disagrees with the ecclesiastical and apostolical tradition. But it is right that we should know that the holy Apostles, when delivering the faith of Christ, with respect to some things, *whatever they considered to be necessary* they delivered *most plainly to all*, even to those who seemed slow in searching after divine knowledge, *leaving the full purport of their declarations* to be inquired into by those who should deserve *the excellent gifts of the Spirit*, and had obtained, in an especial degree, through the Holy Spirit himself, the gift of speech, wisdom, and knowledge: but with respect to other things, they said that they are so; but how or whence they are so, they give no account; in order that the more studious of those who should come after them, who might be lovers of wisdom, might have a subject for study, in which they might show the fruits of their understanding; those truly who should make themselves worthy and fit to receive wisdom. But the outlines (*species*) of those [truths], that are manifestly delivered in the preaching of the Apostles, are these; First, that there is one God, who created and made all things, and who, when nothing existed, brought the whole universe into being, from the first creature and the foundation of the world, the God of all the saints, of Adam, Abel, Seth, Enos, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve Patriarchs, Moses, and the Prophets; and that this God in the last days, as he had before promised by his Prophets, sent our Lord Jesus Christ, first to call Israel, and then, after the treachery of the people of Israel,

the Gentiles. This just and good God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, gave the law, and the prophets, and the gospels, being also the God of the Apostles, and of the Old and New Testament. Then, that Jesus Christ himself who came, was begotten of the Father before all creatures; who, after he had ministered to the Father in the creation of all things, for by him all things were made, in the last times depriving himself of his glory, being made man, was incarnate through God; and, when made man, remained what he was, God. He assumed a body similar to our body, differing only in that it sprung from the Virgin and the Holy Spirit. And that this Jesus Christ was born and suffered in reality, and not merely in appearance suffered the death which is common to all; he was truly dead; for he truly rose from the dead, and having conversed with his disciples after his reurrection, was taken up into heaven. Then further, they have declared that the Holy Ghost is associated in dignity and honor with the Father and the Son. *In this it is not yet clearly discerned whether he [i. e. the Holy Spirit] is to be considered as begotten or not,¹ or a Son of God or not. But these points are to be inquired into, as far as we are able, from the sacred Scripture, and to be investigated by acute research.* That that Spirit truly inspired all the saints, both the Prophets and Apostles; and that there was not one Spirit in the ancients, and another in those who were inspired at the advent of Christ, is most clearly proclaimed (prædicatur) in the churches. Moreover, that the soul, having a subsistence and life of its own, when it shall depart out of this world, shall be dealt with according to its deserts; and shall either enjoy eternal life and the inheritance of blessedness, if its deeds shall have afforded it this blessing, or shall be committed to eternal fire and punishment, if its wickedness shall have brought upon it such a fate; and, moreover, that there shall be a time of the resurrection of the dead, when this body, which is now sown in corruption, shall rise in incorruption; and that which is sown in dishonor shall rise in glory. That, also, is declared in the ecclesiastical tradition (prædicatione), that every rational soul has a free choice and will; also that it has a contest to wage against the devil and his angels and opposing powers, because they strive to load it with sins; while we, if we live correctly and prudently, endeavor to free ourselves from such a burthen. Whence it follows that we must understand that we are not subjected to necessity, so as to be compelled to do either good or evil against our inclination.

¹ Such is Rufinus's version, in which alone this work remains. But Jerome (Ep. ad. Avit. 124, Vall.) says the words were, "made or not made," which from Origen's statements elsewhere was no doubt the case. (See p. 241.)

For if we are free agents, some Powers may perhaps impel us to sin, and others assist us in obtaining salvation; but we are not compelled by necessity either to do well or ill, as those think who say that the course and motions of the stars are the cause of human actions, not only of those which happen beyond the liberty of the will, but also of those which are placed within our own power." He proceeds to observe that, with respect to the origin of the soul, there is no sufficiently clear testimony;¹ and adds;—"Concerning the devil and his angels and evil Powers, the ecclesiastical tradition (*prædicatio*) hath taught us that they exist; but what are they, or what is their nature, it has not sufficiently clearly explained. Most, however, entertain the opinion that the devil was an angel, and having become an apostate, persuaded very many angels to transgress with himself, who are still called his angels. Further, the ecclesiastical tradition (*prædicatio*) informs us that the world was made and had a beginning, and is to be destroyed for its wickedness. But what was before this world, or what shall be after the world, is not clearly known to many. For there is no clear testimony concerning these things in the ecclesiastical tradition (*prædicatio*). Then, finally, that the Scriptures were written by the Spirit of God, and have not only the sense which is apparent, but also another concealed from most. For those things that are described, are the outlines of certain mysteries (*sacramentorum*) and the images of divine things. On this point the whole church is agreed, that the whole law is spiritual, but that those things which the law intimates are not known to all, but to those only to whom the gift of the Holy Spirit in the word of wisdom and knowledge is vouchsafed That is also to be found in the ecclesiastical tradition, that there are certain angels of God and good Powers who minister to him in promoting the salvation of men; but when they were created, or of what kind they are, or what is the mode of their existence, is not sufficiently clearly pointed out. But with respect to the sun, and moon, and stars, whether they have souls or not, is not clearly delivered. It behooves, therefore, every one who desires to form a connected statement and body [of theology] out of all these, to use such truths as elementary and fundamental, according to the precept that says, enlighten yourselves with the light of knowledge, that by the aid of manifest and necessary positions, he may diligently search out, with respect to each individual point, what is the truth;

¹ De anima vero utrum ex seminis traduce ducatur, ita ut ratio ipsius vel substantia inserta ipsis seminibus corporalibus habeatur, an vero aliud habeat initium; et hoc ipsum initium si genitum est aut non genitum; vel certe si extrinsecus corpori inditur, necne, non satis manifesta prædicatione distinguitur.

and, as I said, may form one body by examples and affirmations, either those which he may have found in the Holy Scriptures, or those which he may have discovered by diligent inquiry into consequences, and by the course of direct inference."¹

These, as far as I am aware, are the only passages in the writings of the first three centuries, (I might say a longer period,) in which we have any statement of doctrine for which is claimed the universal consent of the apostolical churches. There are doubtless appeals made to antient writers by subsequent Fathers in favour of certain doctrines, as may be made now, but what I speak of is a claim to *the consent of all the apostolical churches*.

I would observe, then, upon these passages, first, that whatever force the argument from such alleged consent might have at that time, it comes before us in a very altered form. The grounds upon which the argument stood might then be verified. The churches appealed to were in existence. The doctrine maintained by them might be ascertained. And until the argument was verified by such an inquiry into the grounds upon which it stood, it had no claim even at that time to be received by any prudent man as infallible evidence, for in such statements as those we have quoted, there was nothing more than the persuasion of one or two individuals, that a great number of distant communities of Christians held such and such doctrines. Place, then, the probability of the individual being rightly informed at what amount you please, you get nothing more than a probable testimony even for his contemporaries until they have verified his assertions. And after all, in those early days, when there were no public confessions of faith agreed upon by the churches, how was their doctrine ascertained? Probably from the testimony of one or two of their clergy, or at best from the statements of their chief bishop. But is this sufficient evidence? Would the statements of Archbishop Whitgift and Archbishop Laud as to the doctrine of the Church of England, even in some of those points mentioned above by Origen, have been the same? Or will our opponents subscribe to the statements made by the English deputies at the Synod of Dort?

And when we come to consider the argument as it now stands, its force is immeasurably reduced from what it *then* was. For with us there is no possibility of verifying these statements. We have the bare word of their authors to depend upon; men who had but few means of information to what we now have; who could hardly have had even themselves the opportunity of verifying their statements, and therefore must have spoken in a great measure from general report; and moreover men whose writings

¹ Origen. De Princip. lib. I. Præf. Op. ed. Bea. tom. I. pp. 47—49.

have been exposed for ages to mutilation and corruption, and have confessedly suffered therefrom, as in the case of Irenæus and Origen can hardly be denied.

However, then, we may regard their statements as tending to confirm the truth, and affording an additional motive to men to believe it, to put them forward as a divine informant is both unfair and unwise, calculated only to prejudice the truth in the eyes of thinking men, who may be doubtful respecting it, when they see our anxiety thus to stop their mouths and cut short their doubts by unfounded claims to evidence "practically infallible" in our favour.

Every man of common experience in such matters will feel how liable these individuals were to be warped by their own views and prejudices in their statements of the doctrine of the Apostolical churches. Nay, I would confidently appeal to our opponents themselves, whether in this statement of Origen there is not distinct evidence of the influence of his own private views in his remark as to *the double sense of Scripture*. And yet he puts it down definitively as a point in which the whole church agreed; and consequently when he comes to the exposition of Scripture, he turns plain narratives into the most fanciful allegories. He is found fault with on this very ground by Jerome, who complains that he "makes his own fancies mysteries of *the church*."¹ Have we not here a distinct proof that such statements cannot be fully depended upon?

They are, in fact, when descending at all into particulars, too much like the large and general statements of the Romanists, as to the prevalence of their views, such, for instance, as that of the great opponent of Bishop Jewell, Harding, as to the prevalence of private masses, when he says, "So it is all Greece over; so it is in Asia, in Syria, in Assyria, in Armenia, and wheresoever the religion of Christ is professed." (See Jewell's Def. of Apol. Pt. 5, ch. 15, div. 1.) But is this to be quoted some thousand years hence in the absence of evidence to prove the assertion as sufficient to establish what is there stated, even though half a dozen others of the same persuasion should say the same?

It is undeniable, indeed, that many of the best of the Fathers were very apt to make large and general statements in favour of their views, which if examined might often be shown to be exaggerated statements even by the documents that happen to remain to us; as, if necessary, I will show, but otherwise I have

¹ *Ingenium suum facit ecclesiæ sacramenta.* In Is. lib. 5. Præf. Op. tom. 4. col. 168. And were we to take Jerome's account (Ep. ad Avit.) of the work from which we have quoted above, instead of Ruffinus's probably unfaithful version, we should find Origen claiming the sanction of the church for vital errors.

no wish to take a course which might diminish that respect which is their due.

I must add, however, that this statement of Origen appears to me clearly to labour under this fault; particularly when I advert to the language of Tertullian, when delivering the Creed quoted from him above, where he seems clearly to intimate that what was beyond the rule of faith he had given was not established as that rule was, but more open to investigation,¹ and, therefore, we may reasonably doubt whether Origen had any sufficient ground, half a century afterwards, to make that Creed two or three times longer, and pronounce so dogmatically as to the Apostolicity and universal reception of various other points. Such assertions partake of the infirmity of their authors.

Nay, it appears to me that the first sentence of the third summary given by Tertullian is, to say the least, very open to an unorthodox interpretation; and I confess more than open to it, in my opinion, because there is confirmatory evidence in favor of it in other parts of Tertullian's writings, and even in the same treatise. He says,—“*Unicum Deum credimus; sub hac tamen dispensatione quam œconomiam dicimus, ut unicus Dei sit et filius, sermo ipsius,*” &c. These words may be understood, I admit, in an orthodox sense, but the question is, in what sense they were used by Tertullian; and I shall show presently, that there are several passages in his works, indicating that the dispensation or œconomy of which he here speaks, was a temporary state of existence, by which it would appear that he held the notion of, not a permanent but only, a dispensational and temporary tri-personality in the Godhead. His view, in a word, appears to have been somewhat like that of Marcellus.*

If such, then, is the case, we here see another specimen of the way in which the sentiments of the individual may influence his delivery of the faith preached by the Apostolical Churches.

At the very best, what is the real state of the case with regard to these summaries? Clearly that all such statements are to be received with caution and reserve, as emanating from men who might not only be deceived when they made such large statements, but might, with the best intentions and an orthodox meaning, speak hastily, unguardedly, and incorrectly, and so as to give countenance to an error not in their minds at the time, and still less, perhaps, in the minds of those to whom they were referring. And if so, it is quite clear that the consciences of men are not to be concluded and bound by such statements.

¹ De Præscr. c. 14. See also Adv. Marc. i. 21.

² See Theodoret. Hæret. Fab. lib. ii. § 10. (ed. Schulze, tom. iv. p. 336.)
 *Τὸ θεοῦ Τριάδα ἐκτακτικῇ καὶ συσταλλικῇ κατὰ διαφορὰς ἀποστομῇ.

Still further, (and most important it is to observe this,) *these statements clearly place definite limits, and those narrow limits, to the doctrines for which the consent of the early church can be with any decent show of probability pleaded.* For, not to confine ourselves to those of Irenæus and Tertullian, which may be said only to be intended to refer to the most essential points, nothing can be clearer than that Origen here gives us as he supposes a definite list and account of *all* the points for which the consent of the early church might be pleaded, and states that *nothing beyond those points was capable of any such confirmation.* Can there, then, be a greater absurdity than that any man living long after him should attempt to *add* to these other points of catholic consent? Surely at the very most we must be contented with Origen's list. We cannot in reason pretend to enlarge it.

To claim, indeed, the consent of the early Apostolical Churches upon points about which there was, as far as we know, no discussion among them, but which subsequent heresies brought into notice, is evidently most unreasonable. True, we may perhaps find such a notice of those points in very early authors as may justly lead us to suppose that they held this or that view respecting them, and this is to us as far as it goes a confirmation of the correctness of the view which they support. But I need not say that such indirect notices of points not in question, are but an indifferent proof of the sentiments even of the writers.

Now, with respect to these statements, it is obvious that there is hardly a point in dispute among Christians at the present day that can be settled by them, except, perhaps, as to the article of the divinity of our Lord against those who consider him a *mere* man. And, surely, no one will pretend to say that they are clearer upon this point than Scripture is.

The principal value of these summaries, as it appears to me, lies in the testimony they bear to the genuineness of the writings of the New Testament. It was not pretended by Irenæus or Tertullian, (whatever might be the case with Origen,) that they stated anything more than was to be found in the writings of the New Testament, but when the heretics denied the genuineness of parts of the Sacred Writings, these Fathers adduced as an argument in favor of the doctrines contained in them, that those doctrines were still preached in all the Apostolical Churches. And so we might argue now in a similar case; though with some abatement from the want of documents and proximity to Apostolical times, and other favorable circumstances which these writers enjoyed. That is, if any one denied the genuineness of parts of Scripture in which the doctrines of the incarnation, re-

surrection, &c. as stated in these summaries, are delivered, we might argue from the widely-extended acceptance and inculcation of such doctrines among the followers of Christ, from the earliest to the present times, that such doctrines formed part of the Christian faith, and hence obtain an indirect argument for the genuineness of the parts questioned.

With us, however, who hold the genuineness and inspiration of the whole of these writings, it is both absurd and irreverent to the Divine Author of Scripture to be guided by an account of those doctrines given us by fallible men, instead of going at once to the Divine Word, and taking our views from thence.

And so thought the earliest writer we have subsequent to the Apostolical age, Justin Martyr, who says to Trypho when about to prove the divinity of Christ, "There are some, I admitted, of our community (*γινώσκεις*), who confess that he [Jesus] is Christ, but affirm that he is a man, born of men; with whom I do not agree, nor should I *even if the great majority of those who are of my own religion should say so*, since we are commanded by Christ himself to be ruled by, not the doctrines of men, but those preached by the blessed prophets, and taught by him."¹

At the same time, I beg to be understood as maintaining that the evidence of patristical tradition forms a very important and powerful argument in favor of the correctness of any interpretation of Scripture so supported.

Let us observe, how one of the earliest Fathers uses the argument. The writer to whom I allude is the Author of "The Little Labyrinth," composed against the heresy of Artemon about the commencement of the third century, and of which the following fragment is preserved by Eusebius. "The heretics say," observes this author, "that all the antients, and the Apostles themselves, both received and taught those things which they now affirm; and that the truth of the gospel (*τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*) was preserved until the times of Victor, who was the thirteenth bishop of Rome from Peter; but that from the time of his successor Zephyrinus the truth was adulterated. *And the remark would perhaps be probable but for that* FIRST THE DIVINE SCRIPTURES OPPOSED THEM, and that there are writings of CERTAIN BRETHREN older than the times of Victor, which they wrote against the heathen in defence of the truth and against the heresies of that time. I mean the writings of Justin, and Miltiades, and Tatian, and Clement, and many others, in all of which Christ is spoken of as God. For who is ignorant of the volumes of Irenæus, and Melito, and the rest which speak of Christ as God and man? And how many psalms and hymns of brethren written by believers

¹ See the passage in c. 10 below.

from the beginning praise Christ as the Word of God, and speak of him as God (ταῖς λέγουσιν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν Χριστὸν ὁμολογούσας;) How, therefore, is it possible, that when the doctrine received by the church was preached so many years ago, all up to the time of Victor should have preached such doctrine as they say? And how is it that they are not ashamed to bring this false accusation against Victor, knowing well that Victor excommunicated Theodotus the tanner, the leader and father of this God-denying apostasy, who first maintained that Christ was a mere man. For if Victor, according to them, entertained such notions as their blasphemy teaches, how could he have cast out Theodotus the author of that heresy?"¹

Now here are no high-sounding claims of *universal consent*, which even at that early period could not be strictly verified. No; these are left for the heretics to make, who, as we here plainly see, liked the argument as well as others have done. But the matter is placed upon just and reasonable grounds. The claim of the heretics, that their doctrine was held and preached by the Apostles and *all* their earliest followers, is denied, FIRST, BECAUSE THE DOCTRINE WAS OPPOSED TO SCRIPTURE, and secondly, because SOME of their earliest followers had left writings in which the contrary was maintained. Now this is precisely the ground taken by the reformers and their true followers. Heresy is refuted first by Scripture, and then antiquity is appealed to in confirmation, to show that what is considered the orthodox doctrine, the correct interpretation of Scripture, is no *novelty*, but has been held by many from the earliest times. In a word, the argument from patristical tradition is pressed only so far as it can be made good. And I need not add, that if this was the best mode of arguing in the third century, we have infinitely stronger reasons to adopt it now.

This fragment, moreover, shows us how little we can rely upon the assertions of individuals, that the catholic consent of the early church was in favor of their views; for here we see, that a direct claim was made to that consent at the commencement of the third century, as favorable to the heresy of Artemon, while Origen (nearly a contemporary) claims it for the opposite doctrine. Both could not be right; and it would little advance the cause of truth to assert, that one party was to be believed and the other not. And as to proof, neither could prove their assertions, except so far as quotations from a few ancient writers could prove them. Artemon, perhaps, could hardly have done that; and his orthodox opponent just quoted does not pretend to do more.

Further; the heresy of Arius remains untouched by these state-

¹ Euseb. H. E. v. 28. Routh Reliq. Sacr. vol. ii. pp. 7, 8.

ments, for he and his followers have always acknowledged the divinity of Christ, but have considered it as in certain respects inferior to that of the Father. Their heresy consists in drawing subtle distinctions between the nature of the Father and the Son, against which these statements of the doctrine held by the Apostolical Churches prove nothing; because, though *we* may believe that the term God is not properly applicable as the Arians have applied it, this is hardly more than a matter of opinion.

Moreover, as these summaries will afford us no help against the errors of Arius, neither will they against those of Nestorius or Pelagius, or indeed scarcely any of the *vexatæ quæstiones* that have agitated the church in modern times.

By these statements, then, even admitting that they may be fully depended upon as infallibly correct, the doctrines that can be supported by the catholic consent of the early church are reduced within an exceedingly narrow compass, so narrow, that it is hardly worth disputing about whether that consent, as here represented, is to be regarded as binding upon the conscience or not; for even as to the important point of the divinity of Christ against the Socinians, I suppose that he who can explain away the declarations of Scripture, that "the Word was God," &c., can as easily explain away the testimony borne to that truth in these statements. For as "an excellent writer, thoroughly conversant in these subjects" (as Bishop Horne calls him, when quoting the following testimony) has said, "Cannot one *know* that the Socinian interpretation of John i. 1, and Hebr. i. 10, or of the texts relating to Christ's pre-existence, is not the mind of Scripture? Yea, one may know it as certainly as that a counter is not the king's coin, or that a monster is not a man."¹

In proceeding to consider the nature of the evidence which we possess in the writings that remain to us of the first three centuries, upon the points connected with Arian, Macedonian, Nestorian, Eutychian, Pelagian, and such like errors, in connexion with our present subject, I am entering upon an examination which I would fain have been spared the necessity of making. Much rather would I have been engaged in showing to those who may oppose the orthodox doctrine in these points, the strength of the evidence in favor of orthodoxy, than in showing, against those who are setting up unwarranted claims for the supreme authority and conscience-binding nature of that evidence as catholic consent and a *divine informant*, that it has no claim to such a character. To show the weak side of one part of the argument for truth is a painful task, and one which, no doubt, exposes one to the being placed in the unenviable predicament of

¹ Bp. Horne's Sermon at Cant. July 1, 1786. Oxf. 1786. p. 13.

being quoted by the unorthodox as a friend of error, and abused by the hot and violent champions of orthodoxy as having aided the cause of heresy. I will not, however, allow myself to be deterred, even by the prospect of such a fate, from holding out a warning against placing truth in any degree upon a foundation that will not stand investigation. Our opponents seem to me like men, who when they have got a rock to build upon, prefer making their foundation partly of sand, and moreover putting the sand uppermost; and the consequence is, that even in points where they may have got the right foundation underneath them, their whole edifice is in danger; because, not satisfied with the rock, they must have the sand above it. I think then, that I shall do no harm, if I persuade those who are about to build for themselves, to be satisfied with the rock; and this I shall best do, by showing them that what our opponents have added to the rock, is *as a foundation* little better than sand. It may be very useful to aid them in the construction of the building, but it will not bear the house.

First, then, as to the doctrine of the Trinity.

Do we find catholic consent among the writings that remain to us of the three first centuries, even upon this fundamental point? Let us inquire.

First, as it respects the Divinity of the Holy Spirit.

There are, no doubt, most clear and satisfactory testimonies to this point to be found in some of the writers of this period; a fact, which I trust every reader will bear in mind, while I proceed to point out other authors of this period who have borne a contrary testimony.

Thus, for instance, Cyprian says, "If a person may be baptized among the heretics, he may also obtain the remission of his sins. If he has obtained the remission of his sins, he is also sanctified, and made the temple of God. I ask, of what God? If of the Creator, it is impossible, for he has never believed in him; if of Christ, neither can he be his temple, who denies Christ to be God; if of the Holy Spirit, since the three are one, how can the Holy Spirit be at peace with him who is the enemy either of the Father or the Son."¹

Nothing can be clearer than this; and many other similar testimonies might be brought from the writers of this period.

¹ Nam si baptizari quis apud hæreticos potuit, utique et remissionem peccatorum consequi potuit. Si peccatorum remissionem consecutus est et sanctificatus est et templum Dei factus est. Quæro, cujus Dei? Si Creatoris, non potuit, qui in eum non credidit: si Christi, nec hujus fieri potest templum qui negat Deum Christum: si Spiritus Sancti, cum tres unum sint, quomodo Spiritus Sanctus placatus esse ei potest, qui aut Patris aut Filii inimicus est? Cyprian. Ep. 73. ed. Pamel. Col. Agr. 1617. p. 106.

But as our opponents claim the consent of all the writers of the primitive catholic church for it, our present object is to show the error of this notion, by pointing out writers of the catholic church who delivered in their writings unorthodox doctrine on this point.

Thus, then, speaks Origen. He is commenting on 1 John i. 3. "All things were made by him;" and he says,—“Since it is true that all things were made by him, we must inquire whether the Holy Spirit was made by him. For I think that he who says that it [the Holy Spirit] was made, and who admits the truth of the declaration, “all things were made by him,” must necessarily embrace the notion that the Holy Spirit was made by the Word, the Word being more antient than the Spirit. But with him who is unwilling to believe that the Holy Spirit was made by Christ, and yet judges what is contained in this gospel to be true, it follows that he must call the Spirit unbegotten [or, uncreated]. But besides these two, him namely who believes that the Holy Spirit was made by the Word, and him who supposes him to be uncreated [or, unbegotten], there may be a third who holds that there is no proper personal existence of the Holy Spirit distinct from the Father and the Son We truly believing that there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and believing that there is nothing unbegotten [or, uncreated]¹ but the Father, receive as the most pious and true the opinion, that of all the things made by the Word, the Holy Spirit is the most honourable, and ranks higher than all the things made by the Father through Christ. And perhaps this is the reason that he is not called the very Son of God, the only-begotten alone being originally by nature Son, who appears to have been necessary to the Holy Spirit, ministering to the formation of his person, not only with respect to his existence, but with respect to his being wise, and endued with reason, and just, and everything which we ought to suppose him to be, according to the parti-

¹ In this and two preceding places I have intimated a doubt as to the reading. My reason is this, that it appears to me that in all of them we must, from the nature of the sentence, read the *same* word, that is, in all these places we must either read *uncreated* or *unbegotten*, which words in the Greek differ only in one letter, being *αγεννητος* and *ακτιστος*, and as Dr. Burton (On Trin. p. 99,) says, “the evidence of MSS. is very little in these cases.” He adds, speaking of the *first two* cases, “I should be inclined to read *αγεννητος* in both places,” not observing, I think, that if so we must probably read *αγεννητος*, or, *uncreated*, in the third place, which affects the real divinity of the Son, from which error Dr. B. has endeavoured to rescue Origen, but of which he is vehemently accused by some of the best authorities of the early church, as I shall notice presently. It appears to me that *ακτιστος* is probably the true reading in all these places.

cipation of those qualities of Christ which we have already mentioned."¹

And again, soon after, he twice repeats that the Holy Spirit was *made* by the Word or Logos.²

It appears to me a waste of words to attempt to reconcile this passage with the Orthodox doctrine. Nor am I aware of any clear and decisive passage to be found in Origen in opposition to the statement here made, and in support of the orthodox doctrine, except, perhaps, in those translations of his works by Rufinus, which on such a point are of no authority, as having been notoriously altered by the translator. And, further, when we find that such men as Jerome, Basil, Epiphanius and Photius, all agree in condemning his sentiments on the subject of the divinity of the Son and Holy Spirit as unsound, can we suppose that there was no ground for the accusation?

Of Pierius also, who is said to have succeeded Origen in the school of Alexandria, Photius informs us, that in his writings "he delivers very dangerous and impious doctrine concerning the Spirit, for he affirms that he is inferior in glory to the Father and Son,"³ adding a charge against him of other errors.

The same charge is brought by Photius against Theognostus.⁴

Nor can Novatian be freed from the same error. For in his work on the Trinity, not only does he say that "every spirit is a creature,"⁵ but he calls the Paraclete "inferior to Christ,"⁶ and when treating expressly, in the latter part of his treatise,⁷ of the

¹ Εξέτασται δὲ, ἀλλῶς ὅπως τοῦ, πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἔγεντο, ἡ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον δι' αὐτοῦ ἔγεντο. Οὐμὲν γὰρ ὅτι τὰ μὴ βασκόντι γίνονται αὐτὸ ἐναι, καὶ προημέτω το, πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἔγεντο, ἀναγκαῖον παραδέεσθαι ὅτι τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα διὰ τοῦ Λόγου ἔγεντο, πρῶτον παρ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ Λόγου τυγχάνοντος. Τὰ δὲ μὴ βουλομένης τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ γέγοναι, ἐνταῦθα τὸ ἀγνόντων αὐτὸ λέγει, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐν τῇ εὐαγγελίᾳ τούτῳ ἐναι κρινόντι. Ἔσται δὲ τις καὶ τρίτος παρὰ τοὺς δύο, τοῦ τε διὰ τοῦ Λόγου παραδεχόμενος τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον γέγοναι, καὶ τοῦ ἀγνόντων αὐτοῦ ἐναι ὑπολαμβάνοντα, δογματίζον μὲν ἐστὶν τινα ἰδίᾳ ὑφίσταται τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἴσταν παρὰ τοῦ πατέρα καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ. . . . Ἡμεῖς μὲντοιγὰ τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις πύθομενοι τυγχάνειν, τοῦ Πατέρα, καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, καὶ ἀγνόντων μὴ εἰ ἴσων τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐναι πιστώνοντες, ὡς εὐσεβεστέρον καὶ ἀλλοῦς, προσέμεθα το, πάντα διὰ τοῦ Λόγου γενομένην, τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα πάντως ἐναι τιμιώτερον, καὶ ταῦτα πάντων τῶν ὑπο τοῦ Πατρὸς διὰ Χριστοῦ γενημένων. Καὶ ταῦτα αὐτὴ ἐστὶν ἡ αὐτῆς τοῦ μὴ καὶ αὐτοῦν χρηματίζον τοῦ Θεοῦ, μοῦ τοῦ μοιολογῶντος ἐστὶν υἱοῦ ἀρχὴν τυγχάνοντος, ὃ χρῆζεν οὐκ αὐτὸ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, διακρινόντος αὐτοῦ τῇ ὑποστάσει, οὐ μοῦν ἐκ τοῦ ἐναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ σφον ἐναι, καὶ λογικόν, καὶ δικαίον, καὶ πᾶν ὅτι ποτετοῦ χρι αὐτοῦ τοῦ τυγχάνοντος, κατὰ μοιολογίαν τῶν προημεμένων ἡμῖν Χριστοῦ ἐπιποιῶν. ORIG. Comment. in Johann. tom. ii. § 6. Op tom. iv. pp. 60—62.

² Το πνεῦμα γίνονται ἐν διὰ τοῦ Λόγου γέγοναι. Ib. p. 62. and see p. 63.

³ Πῶς μὲντοι τοῦ πνεύματος ἐπιστάλας καὶ καὶ δυσσεβὲς δογματίζον, ὑποβιβάζοντες γὰρ αὐτὸ τῆς τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἀπεραστῆς δόξης. Phot. Biblioth. Art. 119. col. 300. ed. 1653.

⁴ Ib. Art. 106. col. 280.

⁵ Omnis Spiritus creatura est. c. 7. ed Pamel. cum Op. Tertull. Col. Agr. 1617. fol.

⁶ Minor Christo Paracletus. c. 24. ib.

⁷ See c. 29.

Holy Spirit, he never shows him to be God, or speaks of him as God, though he had before proved at large of the Father and the Son, that they were God; and towards the conclusion affirming that the Father and Christ, though both God, are but one God, and rebutting the accusation he alleges to have been brought against him, that he thus made *two* Gods, he takes no notice of the Holy Spirit, nor joins him with Christ in the unity of the Godhead.¹ These passages are referred to by Pamelius, who was well able to pronounce judgment in such a case, as showing the unorthodox character of his sentiments on this point. And still further, this very treatise is said by Rufinus,² to have been circulated by the Macedonians, the deniers of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, as favorable to their cause.

Of Lactantius, we are told by Jerome, that "in his writings, and especially in his letters to Demetrian, he altogether denies the entity of the Holy Spirit, and by a Jewish error says that he is to be referred either to the Father or the Son, and that the holiness of each person is pointed out under his name."³

And, lastly, the same Father, Jerome, tells us, "*Many THROUGH IGNORANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES* assert (as also Firmianus does in the eighth book of his letters to Demetrian) that the Father and Son are often called Holy Spirit. And while we ought clearly to believe in a Trinity, they taking away the third Person imagine it to be not a hypostasis of the Trinity, but a name."⁴

And if we include Eusebius (whose orthodoxy is stoutly contended for by some) among these Fathers, we shall find a passage precisely similar to that of Origen. He tells us that the Holy Spirit is "one of those things that were made by the Son, for 'all things were made by him,'" and he adds that this is the doctrine of "*the catholic and holy church.*"⁵

Further, as to any notion of the correct orthodox doctrine

¹ See c. 30.

² Apol. pro Orig. Inter. Op. Orig. ed. Ben. tom. iv. App. p. 53.

³ Lactantius in libris suis et maxime in Epistolis ad Demetrianum Spiritus Sancti omnino negat substantiam, et errore Judaico dicit eum vel ad Patrem referri vel Filium et sanctificationem utriusque Personæ sub ejus nomine demonstrari. HIERON. Ep. ad Pammach. et Ocean. § 7. Ep. 84. Vall. 41. Ben. 65. al.

⁴ Multi per imperitiam Scripturarum (quod et Firmianus in octavo ad Demetrianum Epistolarum libro facit) asserunt Spiritum Sanctum sæpe Patrem sæpe Filium nominari. Et quum perspicue in Trinitate credamus, tertiam Personam auferentes non substantiam ejus volunt esse, sed nomen. Id. In Ep. ad Gal. lib. ii. In c. 4. ver. 6. ed. Vall. Ven. tom. vii. col. 450.

⁵ Το δὲ παραλλήλου Πνεῦμα, οὐτε Θεός, οὐτε ὅτις· ἀπὸ μὴ αἰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ὁμοίως τῷ ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸ τὴν γένεσιν ἀληθῆ. Ἐν δὲ τι τῶν διὰ τοῦ ὁμοίου γινόμενων τυγχάνει, ὅτι καὶ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδ' ἓν. Ταῦτα μὲν οὐκ τῆς Καθολικῆς καὶ ἁγίας Ἐκκλησίας οὐδ' αὖτε διὰ τῶν θεῶν φωνῶν παραδίδεται τὰ μυστήρια. EUSEB. De Eccles. Theolog. lib. iii. c. 6. p. 175. (Col. 1688.)

having been handed down to posterity by the catholic Fathers of this period, *as a body*, it is thus summarily overthrown by Basil, who denies that there was any such delivery of it to be found in the writings of those Fathers *even in his time*. For he says, that the question respecting the Holy Spirit *having been passed over in silence by the antients* [i. e. *comparatively*, for there were some exceptions], through its not having been opposed, was *left unexplained*, and therefore that he would proceed to discuss it *agreeably to the mind of Scripture*;¹ and though he here says that it was passed over in silence through its not having been opposed, this is in contradiction to his own testimony elsewhere, for he has accused Origen,² (if, at least, the latter part of the book on the Holy Spirit is his,) and certainly Dionysius of Alexandria,³ of having in their writings delivered unorthodox doctrine respecting the Holy Ghost; and hence it was probably, viz. from the neglect of the early Fathers on this point, that, in the time of Basil, the opponents of the orthodox doctrine accused the catholics of introducing *novel doctrine* when they insisted on the divinity of the Holy Spirit.⁴

Further, as it respects the full orthodox doctrine of the divinity and generation of Christ, have we such consent? I admit with thankfulness that against the Socinians the testimony of those that remain to us of the Catholic Fathers is, if we take their works, as they ought to be taken, as a whole, unanimous. But that their witness is one whit stronger or more precise than that of several passages of Scripture, and upon which by the way their testimony seems grounded, I utterly deny. But have we such testimony for the full orthodox doctrine on this point? Let us inquire.

I begin with Tatian, whose "Oration against the Greeks" was written before his defection to the heresy of Valentinus. He speaks thus;—"God was in the beginning; but the beginning we have understood to be the power of reason. For the Lord of the Universe being himself the subsistence of all things,⁵ was, as it respects the non-existence of creation at that time, alone. But inasmuch as he was all Power, and was himself the subsistence of all things visible and invisible, with him were all things; for with him *through his power of reason* the Word himself also who

¹ Ἐπειδὴ δὲ τοῦ νῦν ἀνακρινέμεν παρὰ τῶν αἰ καποτομένων ἐπιχειροῦνται ζήτημα, παρατηρήσθαι τοῖς παλαιοῖς, διὰ τοῦ ἀνακρινέμεν, ἀδιακρίτως καταλελειμένον (λέγει δὲ τὸ πρῶτον τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος) προστίθεται τοῖς πρῶτον τούτων λόγων ἀκολουθεῖ τὸ τῆς γραμμῆς σπουδαίον. BASIL. Ep. 159. tom. iii. p. 248.

² De Spir. Sanct. c. 29. § 73. tom. iii. pp. 61, 2.

³ Ep. 9. tom. iii. p. 91.

⁴ See § 7 of this chapter, below.

⁵ As Tertullian says, "Ipse sibi et mundus et locus et omnia."

was in him subsisted. But by the will of his single-mindedness the Word comes forth ; but the Word not having proceeded from him in vain, becomes *the firstborn work* of the Father. This we know to be the beginning of the world. But he [the Word] was produced by distribution not abscission. For that which is cut off is separated and taken away from the first ; but that which arises by distribution, having assumed an œconomical condition, does not leave that from which it is taken destitute of it. For as from one torch many flames are produced, but the light of the first torch is not lessened by the ignition of many torches, thus also the Word having come forth from the power of the Father, did not leave him who begot the Word destitute of it. For also I speak and you hear. And yet I who address you do not by any means become destitute of my word through the transmission of it.”¹

Here the Word seems clearly represented to have been *produced* but just before the creation of the world, as a *personal* agent, and before his birth for the formation of the world to have existed only in the reason of the Father. This is a doctrine which several of the early Fathers whose writings remain to us have delivered, and particularly Tertullian as we shall see presently. But it is certainly contrary to the doctrine of the co-eternity of the Son with the Father, *as Son*, and as a *personal* agent. There are also other expressions in this passage not very agreeable to the orthodox doctrine, such as that the Word is “the firstborn *work* of the Father,” and that the distribution (to use his own word) of the Godhead into three Persons was an œconomical state of the Godhead ; on which matter we shall have some further remarks to make when we come to consider the testimony of Tertullian.²

The same doctrine is delivered by Athenagoras, who says of

¹ Θεός ην εν αρχη, την δε αρχην λόγου δυναμιν περιελαβεν. Ὁ γὰρ θεοποιὸς τῶν ὅλων αὐτὸς ὑπαρχὸν τοῦ παντός ἡ ὑπόστασις, κατὰ μὴν τὴν μὲν πάντα γενημένην ποιῶσιν μοῖρα ην. Καθὼ δὲ πᾶσα δυναμὶς, ὁρατὸν τε καὶ αἰσθητὸν αὐτὸς ὑπόστασις ην, οὕτως αὐτὰ πάντα, οὕτως αὐτὸς γὰρ διὰ λογικῆς δυναμὸς αὐτὸς καὶ ὁ λόγος ὅς ην ἐν αὐτῷ ὑπόστασις. Θελήματι δὲ τῆς αἰδομένης αὐτοῦ προσηλωτῆς λόγος. ὁ δὲ λόγος οὐ κατὰ κῆρυξιν χωριστὸς, ἀλλὰ πρωτογενὴς τοῦ πατρὸς γένεσις. Τούτῳ κῆρυγι τοῦ κόσμου τὴν ἀρχὴν. Γενεσις δὲ κατὰ μῆτρον, οὐ κατὰ ἀποκοπήν. Το γὰρ ἀποκομῆν τοῦ πρώτου χωριστὸς το δὲ μερισθὲν οὐκ ὀνομαζομένην ἀποκομὴν οὐκ ἔστιν τοῦ ὅθεν ἀναπτύσσεται πεποιμένη. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἀπὸ μιᾶς δαδὸς ἀναπτύσσεται μὴ πῦρ πολλὰ, τῆς δὲ πρώτης δαδὸς διὰ τὴν ἑαλέην τὴν πολλὰ δαδὸν οὐκ ἐλαττύνεται τὸ φῶς. οὕτως καὶ ὁ λόγος προελθὼν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς δυναμὸς, οὐκ ἀλογὸν πεποιμένη τὴν γενηνικότητα. Καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐνὶ λαλῶν, καὶ ἡμῶς ἀκούοντες, καὶ οὐ διὰ τῆς μεταβάσεως τοῦ λόγου κενὸς ὁ προσμιλλῶν λόγος γινώσκων. ΤΑ ΤΙΔΗ. CONTR. GRÆC. GRAT. § 5. ED. BEN. PP. 247, 8. The words *οὕτως αὐτὸς γὰρ* are put by the Benedictine editors within brackets as of doubtful authority, but without any sufficient ground. I have interpreted *λόγος*, in the first place in which it occurs, *reason*, for which rendering see the observations on Tertullian.

² In connexion with these remarks see the dissertation on Tatian at the end of Worth's edition. See also Cave, Hist. Lit.

"the Son," that "he is the *first-born* of the Father, not as a created being, (for, from the beginning, God—*being an eternal mind—had the Word (or Reason) in himself, being endued with reason from eternity,*) but as having come forth to be the form and energy of all material things." &c.¹ And in the words immediately preceding, he says, that "the Son of God is the Father's reason (or word) in form and action." So that the generation of the Son is the putting forth of the Father's reason in action, as a personal agent for the work of creation.

So Theophilus of Antioch. "God, therefore, having his Word within him in his own bowels, brought him forth, having given birth to him with his wisdom, before all things. This Word he had as his minister in the creation of his works, and by him he made all things."² And again:—"The God and Father of the universe is not comprehensible within any fixed space, and is not found in any certain place. For there is no place of his rest. But his Word, by whom he made all things, being his power and wisdom, assuming the appearance of the Father and Lord of the universe, was present in Paradise in the form of God, and conversed with Adam. For the Divine Scripture itself also teaches us that when Adam spoke, he heard a voice; but what else is this voice, than without doubt the Word, which is of God, who is also his Son?—not in the sense that poets and mythologists speak of sons of Gods . . . but as truth declares, as the Word that was always laid up within in the heart of God. For, before that anything existed, he had this [Word] as his counsellor, *being his mind and understanding*; but *when* God wished to make the things he had resolved upon, he *brought forth this Word as an eternal Word*, born before the whole creation; not being himself rendered destitute of his Word, but, after having generated the Word, being still always in communion with his Word."³

¹ Πρωτον γνησιμα νηαι τω Πατρι, ουχ ως γνησιμοι (εξ αρχης γαρ ο Θεος, τους αδελφους, ειχεν αυτος εν εαυτω τον Λογον, αδικος λογικος ου) αλλ' ως τον υλικον συμπαρτατον . . . εδωκεν και ενεργημα νηαι προελθειν. Athenag. Leg. pro Christianis. § 10. Ed. Ben. p. 287.

² Εστιν ο υιος του Θεου λογος του Πατρος εν ιδεα και ενεργεια.

³ Εχουσιν ον ο Θεος τον εαυτου Λογον ενδεδυμενον εν ταις ιδεαις σπλαγγχης. ηγνησθη αυτος μετα της εαυτου σοφιας εξηρυταμνος προ των ολων. Τωτοι τον Λογον εχεν ιπουργον των υπ' αυτου γηνησιμων, και δι' αυτου τα παντα ποιησιν. THEOPH. ANTIOCH. Ad. Auto. lib. ii. § 10. Ed. Ben. p. 355.

⁴ Ο μη Θεος και Πατηρ των ολων αχωριτος εστι, και εν τοπω ουκ υμνοεσται. ου γαρ εστι τοπος της κατασκευας αυτου. Ο δε Λογος αυτου, δι' ου τα παντα ποιησιν, δυναμις ου και σοφια αυτου, αναλαμβανον το προσωπον του Πατρος και Κυμου των ολων, ουτος παρεστης εις τον παραδεισον εν προσωπω του Θεου, και οικησεν τω Αδαμ. Και γαρ αυτη η δυναμις γραφει διδασκει ημας τον Αδαμ λεγοντα της φωτις ακουσαι φωνη δε τι αλλο εστιν, αλλ' η ο Λογος ο του Θεου, ος εστι και υιος αυτου, ουχ ως οι ποιηται και μυθογραφαι λεγουσιν υιους Θεου εκ συνουσιας γνησιμους, αλλα ως αληθεια ηγνεται, τον Λογον τον οντα διαπαντος ενδεδυμενον εν καρδια του Θεου. Προ γαρ τι γινεσθαι, τωτοι μη εν συμβουλοι, εαυτου νου και φρονεσει οντα. Οποτε δε ηδουλησεν ο Θεος ποιηται οσα εβουλησασα, τωτοι τον Διγον ενλησεν προσκοιτον, των τρωτων πασης κτισιος, ου κωιδως αυτος του Λογου, αλλα Λογον γηνησας και τω Αζω αυτου διαπαντος οικησεν. Ib. § 22. p. 365.

Here again it can hardly be maintained that the *λογος ενδιδυκτος*, the internal Word, when existing only as "the mind and understanding" of the Father existed as a person distinct from the person of the Father; and the generation of the *λογος προφορικος*, the external Word, is traced to a voluntary act of the Father, taking place just before the creation of the world.

And here I would observe that in all these statements, as in others which we shall notice presently, the generation of the Word or Son, is represented as an act of the Father's will, contingent upon his conceiving the purpose of creating the world.¹

A similar generation of the Word is also asserted by Hippolytus, and in terms which seem clearly to indicate that before that generation, he had not a *distinct and personal* existence. For, after speaking of this generation in terms very similar to those we have already quoted, he observes, "*And thus there was present to him [i. e. the Father] another.* But when I say another, I do not mean two Gods, but as light from light, or as water from a fountain, or as a ray from the sun."²

It is quite true that Bishop Bull has attempted to reconcile these statement with the orthodox doctrine. Whether he has explained them correctly, I leave the reader to judge.

But supposing that his interpretation of them is the right one, it does not appear to me to vindicate their orthodoxy.

In whichever way we understand them, they appear to me to be irreconcilable with the orthodox doctrine. For if, as some think, and as the expressions used would certainly lead me to conclude, these Fathers held that the Word or Son did not exist *as a Person*, until the generation of which they here speak, which is unquestionably a generation for the purposes of creation, they certainly spoke contrary to the generally-received orthodox doctrine. But if, on the other hand, they intended by these statements, as Bishop Bull supposes, to intimate the existence of the Word as a Person in the Father, before the generation of which they here speak, then their statements amount to a maintenance of the doctrine of an *original* and *essential* plurality of persons in the Godhead, which is equally unorthodox.³ For they say that the Word or Reason (*λογος*) was always in the Father, because the Father was always endued with reason

¹ That these statements are Platonic rather than Christian, is allowed by Le Quien and Lumper. See Lamp. Hist. Crit. Patr. vol. 3. pp. 170, &c.

² Καὶ οὕτως παριστάτο αὐτῷ ἕτερος. Ἐπὶ οὗ δὲ λέγειν οὐ δύο θεοὺς λέγει, ἀλλ' ὡς εἶπες καὶ φανερὸν, &c. Hippol. Contr. Noet. num. 10. Ed. Fabric.

³ "There can be but one Person originally of himself subsisting in that infinite Being, because a plurality of more persons so subsisting would necessarily infer a multiplicity of gods. . . . Wherefore it necessarily followeth that Jesus Christ, who is certainly not the Father, cannot be a Person subsisting in the Divine nature originally of himself." PEARSON, Expos. of Creed, pp. 203, 4. ed. Dobson.

(λογος); and as being his "mind and intelligence." Now the Divine Being was originally and essentially endued with reason (λογος); and hence, according to these authors, the Word or Reason was originally and essentially in the Father. If, therefore, we suppose that they meant that the Word (λογος) existing thus originally and essentially in the Father was a Person, their language implies that there is an original and essential plurality of persons in the Godhead. There is nothing in these statements to bear out the ingenious fiction of Bishop Bull, that by the generation of which they speak, their authors meant a figurative or metaphorical generation succeeding to a prior and eternal generation. Nay, on the contrary, they speak of this generation as that by which the Son *became* the *first begotten* of the Father. Consequently, if he existed as a Person in the Father before this, he existed, not as one generated of the Father, but as one *originally* existing as a Second Person in the Godhead; and thus as being equally with the Father, underived and without a beginning.

Let us compare with them the language of Justin Martyr. He says that "before all created things, God begot a certain rational power (δυναμις λογικη) of himself,"¹ which he proceeds to say is called by the various names of the Son, the Word, &c. This generation of the Son, is evidently the same as that spoken of by the authors we have just quoted; and is clearly no figurative or metaphorical generation, but *the* generation of the Son, which is here described (as it appears to me) as a putting forth of that "rational power" that always existed in the Father, as a *personal* agent; for if this rational power, as it previously existed in the Father, was a personal agent, then there was an essential plurality of persons in the Godhead; and the Second Person was essentially and originally, and not by generation, in the Godhead; which is contrary to the orthodox doctrine: for though the essence of the Son existed originally in the Father, and was not begotten of him, the person of the Son was begotten of the Father.

Nay, more; I would put it to the reader whether the language of these writers is not such as clearly to show that they considered the generation of which they here speak, to be the donation of personality (if I may so speak) to the Word by the Father, particularly that of Hippolytus. And their idea seems to have been that the putting forth of the Father's reason as a personal agent, was like a lighted torch igniting another; which act of ignition does not diminish the light of the first torch, but is, as it were, an extension or distribution of the original flame;

¹ Dial. cum Tryph. § 61. p. 157. ed. Ben.

and so the rational power of the Father was not diminished by this distribution of it.

Nor is the argument of Bishop Bull against this, derived from their speaking of the Word or Son as having been always in the Father, of any avail; because their words may apply to the *essence*, and not the *person*; and when they say that the *word*, or *reason*, Λογος, was always in the Father, *because* the Father was always and originally *rational*, λογικος, it seems clear that they were intended to be so applied. And it is undeniable that such expressions were used in that sense; as, for instance, by Paul of Samosata, who, as Dr. Burton¹ tells us, “believed the Logos to be God, and to reside in the Father, but not to have a separate existence.” Nay, Dr. Burton, speaking of these very writers, tells us² that they borrowed their notions from the Platonizing Jews of Alexandria, who, as he says, “had learned *almost* to personify the mind or reason of God, as may be seen in the works of Philo Judæus;” while “it may be demonstrated that these Alexandrian Jews did not *really mean* to speak of Wisdom, or the Reason of God, as *distinctly existing Persons* ;” and the cautions which Dr. Burton seems to think are given by these writers against a Platonic application of the terms, I am unable to find; but, on the contrary, their words seem to me clearly to show that they held that there was no Second Person, till the generation of which they here speak.

When, therefore, Hippolytus calls the Son “co-eternal with the Father” (συναϊδιος τῷ Πατρὶ),³ there can be no doubt that *with his views* he is speaking with reference to his essence; for otherwise he would contradict himself. It is, in fact, language of the same purport as that which is used by those we have already quoted, when the Word or Reason is said to have been *always in the Father*, because the Father was always endued with reason (λογικος). Let it not be replied that it would have been absurd to have used the words in that sense, because it is undeniable that such language was used in that sense. Nay, similar language was used, even where it was held that there was a time when the Son was only *potentially* in the Father.

Thus Eusebius says,—“Moreover it was judged not improper that the saying that *he was not before he was begotten*, should be anathematized; seeing it was confessed by all that he was the Son of God, even before his generation according to the flesh.

¹ Testim. of Ante-Nic. Fathers to Div. of Christ. 2d ed. p. 398.

² Testim. of Ante-Nic. Fathers to Trin. p. 30.

³ Demonstr. contr. Jud. c. 7. Op. vol. 2. p. 4. The work “De consummatione mundi et de Antichristo,” from which Bishop Bull gives an extract, in which Christ is spoken of as συναρχος τῷ Πατρὶ, is now by almost universal consent adjudged spurious. See Hippol. Op. ed. Fabric. vol. 1. App. p. 3, and p. 26.

And further, our emperor, beloved of God, argued that he was before all ages, even with respect to his Divine generation ; *since even before he was actually begotten, he was potentially in the Father without generation* ; the Father being always Father, as also always King and Saviour, and *potentially* being *all things*, both always and in the same manner, and continuing unchanged."¹

This passage is, as might be expected from its author, evasive and unorthodox, and in such a case where a single word makes all the difference, we may reasonably hesitate to receive this report of Constantine's opinions as one altogether trustworthy.² But be that as it may, the statement shows that the co-eternity may be held in words where the sense in which it is held is anything but orthodox. For God is here held to have been always a Father only in the same way that he was everything else, that is *potentially*, which strikes at the foundation of the doctrine of the consubstantiality, as well as of the *personal* co-eternity.

True it is that there were others who used such terms to express the orthodox doctrine, and applied them to *the Person of the Son*, in order more effectually to refute the error of Arius, who said that there was a time when the Son was not. The sense, therefore, in which these terms were used by any particular Father must be determined by the views he has advanced elsewhere.

I may here add also, that there seem to have been those who though they anathematized the errors of Arius, scrupled to use such terms. The objection, in the case of many of them at least, was that such terms seemed equivalent to a denial of the generation of the Son, and made Him a Person originally self-existent in the Godhead,³ and not from their denying his *virtual* co-eternity, as the effulgence proceeding from light is virtually co-eternal with it. Their difference, therefore, *in this respect*, was a mere difference in words, because there were some at least who used these words, who did not mean to convey by them the idea of the Second Person in the Trinity being originally in the Godhead as an underived Person.

Hence, perhaps, it was that the Nicene or Constantinopolitan

¹ Ετι μὴ το αναθεματίζεσθαι, το προ του γεννηθῆαι ουκ ην, ουκ αποτειν νομισθη, το παρα παση ομολογεσθαι, ναιαι αυτον ὅτιον του Θεου και προ της κατα σαρκι γενεσης. Ἡδη δὲ ὁ θεωρησετατος ἡμῶν βασιλεὺς το λογι κατισκαναζῆς, και κατα την εθνη αυτου γεννηση το προ παντων αἰωνῶν ναιαι αυτοι, επι και πριν σηνρμα γεννηθῆαι, δυναμι ην η το Πατρι αἰωνωτας, οστος του Πατρος αμν πατρος, ως και βασιλεως αμν, και σωτηρος, και δυναμι παντα οστος αμν τι και κατα τα αυτα, και οσωντος εχοντος. Euseb. Epist. ap. Theodorit. Hist. Eccl. lib. i. c. 11. Op. tom. iii. pp. 781, 2.

² See as opposite testimony, Constantine's Letter to the Nicomedians against Eusebius and Theognis, and his Letter to Arius in Gelas. Cyz. De Act. Conc. Nic. p. 3.

³ See ATHANAS. De Synod. § 26. tom. i. p. 739. ed. Bened.

Creed says of the Son, only that he was begotten of the Father before all worlds or ages, (*πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων*). Here the *direct* affirmation goes no further than to maintain that the Son was begotten of the Father before all time, or was, as some of the Fathers express it, *αἰώνως*, as the Arians themselves allowed.¹ Indeed, the very words of the Constantinopolitan Creed occurs in a Creed given by Athanasius, as one of the numerous semiarian formulæ drawn up about the middle of the fourth century.² And certainly, as Dr. Burton says, "Our powers of abstraction will perhaps not allow us to have a more definite idea of eternal existence than this." (Testim. of Ante-Nic. Fathers to Doctrine of Trinity, pp. 146, 7.) It does no doubt imply eternity, and I suppose was intended to imply a virtual co-eternity with the Father by most if not all of those who annexed it to the Creed, though there might be others who used it in a lower sense. The Creed was so worded probably for the sake of those who would have scrupled the use of the words co-eternal with the Father, though in reality holding the full orthodox faith; and as it often happens in such cases, the words are open to a lower sense.³

It appears to me, then, that all these Fathers held,—That the Son is not *as a Person* even virtually co-eternal with the Father, his generation or prolation as a personal agent taking place before any act of creation, but yet not from all eternity, and taking place for the purpose of his acting in the work of creation, and contingently upon God's having conceived the purpose of creating the world.

Is this orthodox doctrine?

Bishop Pearson says, "The essence which God always had without beginning, without beginning he did communicate, being always Father as always God." (p. 209.)

It is quite true that it is not Sabellianism, because the Sabellians did not regard the Son as ever becoming a distinct Person, nor is it Arianism, because the Arians considered the Son to be created by the Father, and of a different essence to the Father, whereas these Fathers considered the generation of the Son to be only a prolation as a personal agent of that reason, or word, which was always and essentially in the Father, and which Son, therefore, they did not scruple to call without beginning, like the Father, and co-eternal with the Father, because that reason or word, which the Father, when he pleased, put forth as a personal

¹ See ATHANAS. De Synod. § 16. tom. i. pp. 729, 30.

² ATHANAS. De Synod. § 27. tom. i. p. 742.

³ And in this lower sense they were used by the Arians. See ATHANAS. De Synod. § 16. tom. i. pp. 729, 30. and HIL. De Trin. iv. § 12. col. 833.

agent, was without beginning in the Father, and co-eternal with him. But is it the orthodox doctrine? Is it not Semiarianism?

The best defence of what these Fathers have advanced, as it appears to me, would be that they probably thought that the work of creation was one of the first acts of the Godhead, and therefore that when they placed the generation of the Son precedently to the work of creation, they in effect made the Son almost coæval with the Father.¹ And perhaps we should not be far from the truth in supposing this to be their meaning. This I say is the *best* defence I can see for their statements, and one that brings them *nearer* to the orthodox view than any other interpretation of their words, for the exposition of Bishop Bull seems to me to place them as far from orthodoxy as that of Petavius.

The fact is, that, as it respects the original relation of the Second Person of the Trinity to the First, there was much diversity of opinion in the primitive church. "It must be confessed," says Dr. Waterland, "that the catholics themselves were for some time pretty much divided about the question of eternal generation, though there was no question about the eternal existence; *Whether the Λόγος might be rightly said to be begotten in respect of the state which was antecedent to the πρῶτον εἶναι was the point in question.* Athanasius argued strenuously for it, (Contr. Arian. orat. 4.) upon this principle, that whatever is of another and referred to that other as his head (as the Λόγος considered as such plainly was) may and ought to be styled Son and begotten; besides, the Arians had objected that there would be two unbegotten Persons if the Λόγος ever existed and was not in the capacity of Son, and the church had never been used to the language of two unbegottens. These considerations, besides the testimonies of elder Fathers, who had admitted eternal generation, weighed with the generality of the Catholics, *and so eternal generation came to be the more prevailing language, and has prevailed ever since.* There is nothing new in the doctrine more than this, the calling that eternal generation which others would have styled the eternal existence and relation of the

¹ There are some observations of Hilary on this point in his *Treatise on the Trinity*, (lib. 12. §§ 30—45. col. 1127—36. ed. Ben.) which are remarkable. "Natum semper esse," he says, "hoc est, sensum temporum nascendo præcurrere neque intelligenti patere aliquando fuisse non natum." (§ 30.) "Idcirco nunc Sapientia natam se ante sæcula docens anteriorem se non solum his quæ creata sunt docet, sed æternis cœternam, *preparationi scilicet cœli et discretionis sedis Dei . . . Perpetua enim et æterna rerum creandarum est preparatio.*" (§§ 39, 40.) "*Omnis horum preparatio Deo est cœterna.*" (§ 40.) "Ubi ante sæculum est nativitas, infinitæ generationis æternitas est." (§ 45.) See also Cyrill. Alex. *Thesaur.* c. 11. Tom. 5, Part i. p. 87.

Asy; to the Father, which at length *amounts only to a difference in words and names.*" (Waterland's Second Defence, Works vol. iii. p. 296.) Now in this passage (which appears to me altogether a most extraordinary one) it is distinctly admitted that there was no catholic consent on the important point, whether the Second Person of the Sacred Trinity was begotten of the Father, but that some contended for his not being originally begotten. And it is added, out of a desire to spare the Fathers, the prudence of which may well be doubted, that the difference was only a difference in words and names!

And as to their alleged agreement as to the eternal existence, this is no proof that they were of one mind in the matter. For there are at least three opinions wrapped up in this phrase. One, of those who hold the virtual coeternity of the Son as Son with the Father; another, of those who speak of his eternal existence, because the reason or word, which became by the will of the Father, a Person, existed always in the Father; another, of those who mean by his eternal existence, his having been generated only just before creation or time commenced. Nay, the phrase might be even used by those who consider him to have originally existed only potentially in the Father before his generation for the work of creation, as in the passage already quoted from Eusebius.

For the orthodox doctrine I would refer more particularly, among the writers of this period, to Dionysius of Alexandria, who seems to me to have given in a passage quoted by Athanasius (however he may have expressed himself elsewhere) the best and clearest statement of it; and such is the opinion of Athanasius, to whom chiefly we are indebted for the fragments that remain of this author, and from whom I extract the following passage.

"He [i. e. Dionysius] after other remarks writes thus;—There never was a time when God was not a Father. And in what follows he acknowledges that Christ always existed, being reason and wisdom and power; for it was not the case that God, being barren of these, afterwards produced a Son, but he is called a Son because he is not self-existent, but has his being from the Father. And shortly after he says again, concerning the same matter;—But being the effulgence of eternal light, he is himself also altogether eternal; for the light existing always, it is manifest that the effulgence always exists; for in this it is known that it is light, namely in its shining, and light cannot but be effulgent. For let us come again to examples; if there is the Sun, there is light, there is day; if there is neither of these, the Sun also must be far absent. If, therefore, the Sun was eternal, the day also would have no end. But now, this

not being the case, when the Sun begins the day begins, and when the Sun ceases the day ceases. But God is eternal light, that never had a beginning, and will never have an end. Therefore the effulgence is eternally manifested and present with him, without beginning, and *eternally generated* And again, Therefore the Father being eternal, *the Son is eternal*, being light of light. For where there is a parent there is also a child; and if there were no child, how and of whom could he be a parent? But both exist, and *exist always*. . . . Again he says;—But the Son alone *always co-existing with the Father*, and filled with him who exists essentially, exists also himself essentially, being of the Father.”¹

The difference between these passages and those which we have just been considering, is apparent. Here *the generation* of the Son as Son, and a person, is made virtually coeval with the existence of the Father; and his virtual co-eternity with the Father is grounded upon his eternal generation, whereas the writers above quoted place his generation just previous to the work of creation; and though they speak of a previous existence, ground that existence only upon the Father's having always been endued with reason, to which reason he gave, when he conceived the purpose of creation, a personal existence. And we are warned by Dionysius against conceiving of this generation as if any time had elapsed before God became a Father, and that by generation is meant, that the second Person of the Trinity was derived from the first, and derived only as the light is derived from the Sun, so that as the Sun and light are co-existent, so also are the Father and Son. It is true that the same metaphor is used by the writers of whom we have spoken before, but it is not *similarly applied*, for Dionysius illustrates the generation of the Son by it, with reference to the *time* of that generation, (which is the point now in question), whereas both Bishop Bull and Dr. Waterland allow that the generation

¹ Ἰραση . . . μεθ' ἑτέρα, εὐτοκας. Οὐ γὰρ ἢ ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς οὐκ ἦν πατὴρ. καὶ ταῦτο οὐδὲν ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς, αἱ τοὶ Χριστοὶ νῆσαι, λόγον οὐτά καὶ σοφίαν καὶ δύναμιν· οὐ γὰρ δι' αὐτῶν ἀρχὸς ἢ ὁ Θεὸς ὡς ἐπαίδευσεν αὐτοὺς, ἀλλ' ὅτι μὴ παρ' ἑαυτοῦ ὁ υἱός, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκτὸς τοῦ νῆσαι. Καὶ μετ' ὀλίγα πάλιν περὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φησὶν· ἀπαυγασμα δὲ ἢ φωτός αἰδίου, πατὸς καὶ αἰώνιος αἰδίου ἐστίν. ἔντος γὰρ αἱ τοῦ φωτός, δίδωσι ὡς ἐστὶν αἱ τοῦ ἀπαυγασμα· ταῦτα γὰρ καὶ ὅτι φῶς ἐστὶ τὸ καταυγάζειν ἑαυτὰς, καὶ φῶς οὐ δύναται μὴ φωτίζειν νῆσαι. πάλιν γὰρ εὐδοκίᾳ ἐπὶ τα παραδύγματα. ἢ ἐστὶν ἡλίου, ἐστὶν αὐγῆς, ἐστὶν ἡμέρας· ἢ τοιοῦτον μὲν ἐστὶν, πολὺ γὰρ δὴ καὶ παραπῆλαι ἡλίου· ἢ μὴ οὐτ' αἰδίου ὁ ἡλίου, ἀπαυστος αὐτὸς καὶ ἡ καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα. νῦν δὲ, οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν, ἀρχαίου τοῦ τῆς κῆρας. καὶ παυμένου, πᾶντα. ὁ δὲ γὰρ Θεὸς αἰώνιος ἐστὶ φῶς, οὐτὶς ἀρχαίου οὐτὶς λήγει ποτὲ. οὐκοῦν αἰώνιος προκινῶν καὶ συνιστῶν αὐτὸς τὸ ἀπαυγασμα ἀναρχὸς καὶ αἰ- γῶνιος . . . Καὶ αὖτις . . . ὁρτοῦ οὐτ' αἰώνιος τοῦ Πατρὸς, αἰώνιος ὁ υἱός ἐστι, φῶς ἐκ φωτός ὡς ὁρτοῦ γὰρ γόνιμος, ἐστὶ καὶ τέκνον. ἢ δὲ μὴ τέκνον καί, πῶς καὶ τίνος νῆσαι δύναται γόνιμος; ἀλλ' ἐστὶν αἰώνιος. καὶ ἐστὶν αἰώνιος . . . πάλιν φησὶ· μόνος δὲ ὁ υἱός αἱ συνῶν τῷ Πατρί, καὶ τοῦ οὐτὸς πληροῦματος, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐστὶν ὡς ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς. ΑΘΗΝΑΣ. De Sentent. Dionys. § 15. tom. i. pp. 253, 4.

of which these writers speak was a temporal generation for the purpose of creation; and that generation those writers identify with the donation of personality to the Son, and his becoming a Son; and they apply this metaphor only to show the *intimate connexion* between the Father and Son *upon that generation*; and that notwithstanding they were called Father and Son as distinct persons, they were not more separated than a ray of the Sun is from the Sun. As Hippolytus, after speaking of the *temporal generation*, says, "And *thus* there was present to him [i. e. the Father] *another*. But when I say another, I do not mean two Gods, but as *light from light*, or as *water from a fountain*, or as *a ray from the Sun*." (See p. 199 above). This is a different application of the metaphor, or at least an application not equally *comprehensive* with that made by Dionysius, and not including the point now in question. The same application of it is made by Lactantius,¹ who, as we shall hereafter show, did not hold the co-eternity of the Son with the Father.

This passage of Dionysius is particularly valuable, because it is sufficiently full to render it impossible to explain it away. The incorrect use of orthodox terms makes it often impossible to rely upon the testimony of particular passages; for, to qualify them to be a proof, it is necessary to show, by some other passage of the same author, in what sense the terms used were employed, which it is not always possible to do. And herein lies one great difficulty in ascertaining with any certainty, and especially in proving to others, what were the sentiments of the Fathers. Not to say that there is every appearance with some of them of self-contradiction.

It is unnecessary here to add further testimonies, because my object is only to show that there was not an agreement in the Fathers of this period on the point.

Moreover, there are others whose statements are still further removed from the orthodox doctrine, respecting the Second Person in the Sacred Trinity.

And first let us take Tertullian, with respect to whom it cannot be denied that he has spoken in a way which it is impossible completely to reconcile with the orthodox doctrine on this subject. For instance, he says that "the Father is the whole substance, but the Son a derivation and *portion* of the whole, as he himself professes, 'For the Father is greater than I.'"² No orthodox person will say that this is correct language.

¹ Instit. lib. 4. c. 29. p. 230. ed. Cant. 1685.

² Pater enim tota substantia est; filius vero derivatio totius et portio, sicut ipse profitetur, Quia Pater major me est. Adv. Prax. c. ix. p. 504.

True, when we recollect that certain controversies had not been raised in the Church at this time, we may find an apology for it, but this is no help to the theory of our opponents.

But there are still more objectionable passages. How, I would ask, are we to understand the following passage? "God is a Father and God is a Judge, but He was not always a Father and a Judge because always God. For he could neither be a Father before there was a Son, nor a Judge before there was an offence. *But there was a time when there was neither an offence nor a Son.*"¹

At the same time it would be doing an injustice to him not to state what his views are on this point, more fully than this negative statement conveys to us, as they are not properly Arian, though far from orthodox. Thus, then, he speaks on this matter in his Treatise against Praxeas.

"That this cannot be true, I am led to think by other arguments derived from the very constitution of the Godhead, as it existed before the world *up to the generation of the Son.*"² For before all things God was alone, his own world and place and everything. But alone, because besides him nothing else existed out of him. But he was not even then alone, for he had with him that which he had in himself, that is his reason. For God is rational (*rationalis*), and reason is in him at first, and thus from him are all things. Which reason is his intelligence (*sensus*). This the Greeks call *λογος*, which we express also by *sermo*. And consequently it is usual with us, by a translation not altogether accurate, to say that *the Word* (*sermonem*) was in the beginning with God, when it is more accordant with the real state of the case that *reason* (*rationem*) should be considered more antient (*antiquiorem*); because God had not a Word (*non sermonalis*) from the beginning, but God had reason even before the beginning; and because the very Word itself consisting of reason, exhibits that pre-existent (*priorem*) reason as its substance. Yet even so it makes no difference. For although God had not yet

¹ Et pater Deus est et iudex Deus est; non tamen ideo pater et iudex semper, quia Deus semper. Nam nec pater potuit esse ante filium nec iudex ante delictum. Fuit autem tempus cum et delictum et filius non fuit. Adv. Hermog. c. 3. p. 234. Bishop Bull's explanation of this may be seen in his Def. Fid. Nic. iii. 10. 2. et seq. He thinks that Tertullian spoke deceitfully, to answer the purpose of his argument, and used the word Son as applying only to that state which succeeded his coming forth from the Father for the creation of the world. But surely this is too much like special pleading. And even were it so, it is destructive of our opponents' notions, if the Fathers would thus speak deceitfully for the sake of their argument; which, however, after the ingenuous confessions of Jerome, I will not deny that they sometimes did.

² Hoc ut firmum non sit, alia me argumenta deducunt ab ipsa Dei dispositione, qua fuit ante mundi constitutionem, adusque filii generationem. Adv. Prax. c. 5.

sent forth his Word, he nevertheless had it with and in his own reason within himself, by tacitly thinking and contriving with himself those things which he was shortly about to give utterance to by the Word. For thinking and contriving with his reason, he made that reason his Word, which by his Word he made use of." He then proceeds to illustrate this by referring to the example of man, in whom, he says, the word thought is in a manner a second entity within him, and the word itself, when uttered, a different entity from him.¹ And he adds, "How much more fully, then, does this take place in God, of whom you also are considered the image and similitude, that he should have reason in himself even when silent, and in reason a word (*sermone*)? I might, therefore, not incorrectly have laid it down, that God, even then before the formation of the universe, was not alone, having in himself reason, and in reason a word which *he might make second from himself by causing them to act one upon the other.*"² This power and this distribution (*dispositio*) of the Divine intelligence is also spoken of in Scripture by the name of Wisdom. For what is wiser than the reason or word of God? Hear, therefore, Wisdom speaking as one who was made *the second person*. First, 'The Lord created me the beginning of ways towards his works, before he made the earth, before the mountains were placed; before all the hills he begot me;' to wit, forming and begetting in his own intelligence. Then take notice of Wisdom standing by at the moment of separation (*assistentem ipsa separatione*), 'When, saith Wisdom, he was preparing the heavens I was present with him, &c.' For when God desired to give their form and substance to those things which with the reason and word of wisdom he had contrived within himself, he first produced (*protulit*) the word itself, having in itself its component parts, reason and wisdom, that all things might be made by that by which they were thought out and contrived, aye and already made as far as they could be in the Divine intelligence. For this was wanting to them, that they should be openly recognized and possessed in their forms and substances. Then, therefore, the Word itself also received its form and beauty, sound and speech, when God saith, 'Let there be light.' *This is the perfect nativity of the Word as it proceeds from God;*³

¹ Secundus quodammodo in te est sermo, per quem loqueris cogitando et per quem cogitas loquendo. Ipse sermo alius est. Adv. Prax. c. 5.

² In ratione sermonem quem secundum a se faceret agitando intra se. Ib. c. 5.

³ The word *separatio*, if Tertullian's, must have been used hastily here by him, as in cc. 8, 9, he denies that there is any *separatio* between the Father and Son. He uses elsewhere the word *prolatio* in this connexion. I suspect the true reading is, *preparatione*.

⁴ Hæc est nativitas perfecta, sermonis, dum ex Deo procedit. Ib. c. 7.

being formed by him first for thought in the name of wisdom, 'The Lord made me the beginning of his ways;' then begotten to bring to pass the purposed work (ad effectum), "When he was preparing the heavens I was present with him."¹

Again, when reasoning with Hermogenes against the eternity of matter, he says,—“Finally, *when he* [God] *perceived wisdom to be necessary for the works of the world, he immediately forms and generates it in himself.* 'The Lord, saith wisdom, made me the beginning of his ways, &c.' Therefore let Hermogenes acknowledge that the wisdom of God was therefore said to be born and formed lest we should believe anything to be without generation or creation but God alone. For if within the Lord that which was from him and in him, was *not without beginning*, namely, his wisdom, *which was born and made from the time from which it began to be roused in the intelligence of God to arrange the works of the world*; much more is it impossible for anything to have been without a beginning which was out of the Lord.”²

Here then, it appears, that Tertullian, though he denied the eternal generation of the Word or Son, even in his character as Wisdom, entertained the notion of the Word having been as it were in an embryo state of existence in the Father, that is, in his reason, before his generation. But then this is, in fact, merely the existence of the essence, not the existence of the Son as a Person. For if the Son did not exist as Son, he did not exist as a Person, for the Second Person in the Trinity exists by generation from the Father, and is a Son as soon as he is a Person.

Indeed it is evident, from other passages, that Tertullian considered personality to commence upon the generation of the Son. Thus he says:—“Everything which proceeds from anything is necessarily the second of that from which it proceeds, but is not separated. But where there is a second, there are two, and where there is a third, there are three; for the third is the Spirit from God and the Son.”³ And again he says elsewhere, “We

¹ Adv. Prax. cc. 5—7. pp. 502, 3.

² Denique ut necessariam [i. e. Sophiam] sensit ad opera mundi, statim ea [eam] condit et generat in semetipso. Dominus, inquit, condidit me initium viarum suarum in opera sua; ante secula fundavit me, prius quam faceret terram; prius quam montes collocarentur; ante omnes autem colles generavit me; prior autem abysso genita sum. Agnoscat ergo Hermogenes idcirco etiam Sophiam Dei natam et conditam prædicari ne quid innatum et inconditum præter solum Deum crederemus. Si enim intra Dominum quod ex ipso et in ipso fuit, sine initio non fuit: Sophia scilicet ipsius, exinde nata et condita ex quo in sensu Dei ad opera mundi disponenda capit agitari: multo magis non capit sine initio quicquam fuisse quod extra Dominum fuerit. Adv. Hermog. c. 18. p. 239.

³ Omne quod prodit ex aliquo secundum sit ejus necesse est de quo prodit, non tamen est separatum. Secundus autem ubi est, duo sunt, et tertius ubi est, tres sunt; tertius enim est Spiritus a Deo et Filio. Tertull. adv. Prax. c. 8.

assert two, Father and Son, and *now* three with the Holy Spirit, according to the ratio of œconomy *which makes a plurality of persons.*"¹

This last passage reminds me of the observation previously made respecting the third summary of the faith given by Tertullian, where, as it appeared to me, there was a recognition of the notion that formed the heresy of Marcellus, viz. that the tripersonality of the Godhead, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, was only a dispensational or œconomical and temporary mode of existence of the Godhead, for it was the notion of Marcellus that the Godhead was extended and contracted according to different dispensations (*οικονομίας*). Had the passage in that summary stood alone, one might have been contented to affix a different idea to the words, but in this passage there is clearly a similar statement. And in the following the notion is still more fully expressed. "Observe, therefore, lest you rather destroy the monarchy [of God] who overturn its arrangement and dispensation, appointed in *as many names as God pleased*. But it so far remains in *its own* state, though a *Trinity* be introduced, that it even has to be restored to the Father by the Son; as the Apostle writes concerning the last end, 'when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father.'"² Here he evidently supposes that there might have been, if the Father had so willed it, more than three persons in the Godhead, and that the tripersonal state as now existing was not from all eternity, and was only an œconomical state.

However, be this as it may, his statements respecting the Son are clearly incorrect.

The reader will observe also that I am not here attributing to Tertullian incorrect views on the ground of statements which admit of an orthodox interpretation, or which may be reconciled to orthodoxy by a comparison with other passages in his works, though in themselves not the most fit expressions, (as Semblar, for instance has done) but limit my remarks to those points in

¹ Duos quidem definimus Patrem et Filium, et jam tres cum Spiritu Sancto, secundum rationem œconomiz quæ facit numerum. Adv. Prax. c. 13, p. 507. See also c. 16. And observe the following;—Quæcunque ergo substantia sermonis fuit, illam dico personam, et illi nomen filii vindico. Adv. Prax. c. 7, p. 504.

² Vide ergo ne tu potius monarchiam destruas, qui dispositionem et dispensationem ejus evertis in tot nominibus constitutam in quot Deus voluit. Adeo autem manet in suo statu, LICET TRINITAS INFERATUR, ut etiam restitui habeat Patri a Filio. Siquidem Apostolus scribit de ultimo fine quum tradiderit regnum Deo et Patri. Adv. Prax. c. 4, p. 502. Observe also the following;—Videmur [videmus] igitur non obesse monarchiæ filium, etsi hodie apud filium est; quia et in suo statu est apud filium, et cum suo statu restituetur Patri a filio. Ita eam nemo hoc nomine destruet, si filium admittat, cui et traditam eam a Patre et a quo quandoque restituendam Patri constat. Adv. Prax. c. 4, p. 502.

which his views appear (as far as I am able to judge) to have been incorrect. His view appears to have been that the production of the Word or Son is an act which must have been performed by one already in existence, and therefore that *reason* only, and not *the Word* or *Son*, can be said to be co-eternal with the Father. There is an important difference, however, between his view and that of the Arians, because they spoke of the generation of the Son as a creation, and of the Son as being made from that which was not (*ἐκ οὐκ ὄντος*), and of a different essence to the Father, which is contrary to the views inculcated by Tertullian. There are perhaps other remarks in these subtle lucubrations of Tertullian, upon which, if inclined to say all that might be said, one might be disposed to offer an observation, but some allowance must be made for the imperfection of human language when applied to such mysteries. However there can be no doubt that the language of Tertullian savoured more of Platonism than Apostolicity; nor is this any new idea, for thus speaks Gennadius of the fifth century, "Nihil ex Trinitatis essentia ad creaturam naturam deductum, ut Plato et Tertullianus."¹ And how, indeed, can any author be depended upon of whom it is confessed by his most strenuous defenders, that he argued deceitfully, and *cared little what he said of God in refutation of his opponent?*²

Bishop Bull has laboured hard to bring him *near* orthodoxy, though apparently giving up the hope of effecting more than an approximation. His view and the difficulties under which it labours may be seen in the following passage of Dr. Waterland, in which it is described. "Tertullian is known to have distinguished between *ratio* and *sermo*, both of them names of the selfsame Λόγος, considered at different times under different capacities; first, as *silent* and unoperating, alone with the Father; afterwards *proceeding* or going forth from the Father, to operate in the creation. *With this procession he supposes, as do many others, the Sonship properly to commence.* So that though the Λόγος had always existed, yet he became a Son in time, and in this sense there was a time when the Father had no Son." (Second Def. Works, vol. iii. p. 101.) Consequently, if this view is correct, the generation of the Son from the Father was in fact not a generation but a mere procession from the Father of one who existed before as a Person, an active and intelligent personal agent, within him, and therefore the words generation and Son are used without any proper meaning, and the Second Person in

¹ De eccles. dogmat. c. 4. Inter. Op. August. ed. Ben. tom. 6 app. col. 76.

² BULL Def. Fid. Nic. iii. 10. 4.

the Trinity was not generated by the First. Is this orthodox doctrine?¹

I proceed to Novatian, who says,—“He therefore, [i. e. the Son,] *when the Father pleased*, proceeded from the Father; and he who was in the Father, proceeded from the Father; and he who was in the Father, as he was from the Father, was afterwards with the Father, because he proceeded from the Father; namely, that Divine Subsistence, whose name is the Word, by which all things were made, and without which nothing was made. For all things are after him, because they are by him; and he is before all things, since all things were made by him; who proceeded from him by whose will all things were made; God, namely, proceeding from God, *making a second person*, but not depriving the Father of being the only God.”²

He has also a still more objectionable passage, in which he has undeniably given the unorthodox interpretation to Phil. ii. 7. “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” He says,—“Nevertheless this very thing that he should be both God and Lord of all things, and God, after the form of God the Father, he obtained from his Father, being born

¹ Bishop Bull supposes that when the Arians at the Council of Nice affirmed of the Son that he was not before he was begotten, they meant to oppose the notion advanced as he thinks, by some at that time, who, while they held a temporal generation for the purposes of creation, from which the Second Person of the Trinity was called in Scripture the Son of God, and the first-begotten, maintained also that he existed before by an eternal generation from the Father, and that many of the catholics at Nice understanding the term begotten as used by the Arians to refer to that temporal generation, meant to maintain, in their condemnation of the Arians, that he was before he was thus begotten. (Def. fid. Nic. iii. 9. 2.) But this is clearly disproved by the mode of arguing adopted by the Arians, which shows that they spoke of the original generation of the Son from the Father, without particular reference to such views. (See Athanas. De Synod. § 16. tom. 1. p. 729. Hilar. De Trin. lib. xii. Basil. adv. Eunom. lib. 2.) Whether there were any at Nice who held the notion of a temporal generation for the purpose of creation as distinguished from the eternal generation, is a point respecting which we have not the smallest evidence. But certainly Hilary in his replies to the Arians treats the question as one relating to the original generation of the Son, (De Trin. lib. 12.) and particularly opposes any supposition that the catholics in condemning the Arian saying, “he was not before he was begotten,” meant to affirm that he was before he was begotten, and contends against it only on the ground of its seeming to impugn the eternity of the Son. (Ib. §§ 30, 31. col. 1127, 8.)

² Hic ergo quando Pater voluit processit ex Patre; et qui in Patre fuit processit ex Patre; et qui in Patre fuit, quia ex Patre fuit, cum Patre postmodum fuit, quia ex Patre processit; Substantia scilicet illa divina, cujus nomen est Verbum, per quod facta sunt omnia, et sine quo factum est nihil. Omnia enim post ipsum sunt quia per ipsum sunt et merito ipse est ante omnia, quando per illum facta sunt omnia, qui processit ex eo ex cujus voluntate facta sunt omnia: Deus utique procedens ex Deo secundam personam efficiens, sed non eripiens illud Patri quod unus est Deus. NOVATIAN. De Trin. c. 31. Apud Tertull. Op. Col. Agripp. 1617. p. 743.

and brought forth of him. Although, therefore, he was in the form of God, [non est rapinam arbitratus æqualem se esse Deo; which, from the remarks that follow, he must have translated, as some others have done, to this effect;] he did not think it fell to his lot to be equal with God. For although he remembered that he was God of God the Father, he never either compared or likened himself to God the Father, remembering that he was of his own Father, and that he *possessed existence* BECAUSE *the Father had given it*. Hence, then, both before his incarnation, and after his assumption of a body, nay, moreover, after the resurrection itself, he rendered, and still renders, all obedience to the Father in all things. From which it appears that he *never contemplated that any such divinity fell to his lot, as that he should equal himself to God the Father*; nay, on the contrary, being obedient and subject to all his commands and will, he was content to take upon himself the form of a servant, &c."¹ And again;—"He is, therefore, God; but begotten for this very purpose, that he might be God. He is also Lord, but born of the Father for this very purpose, that he might be Lord."² According to him, therefore, he was not co-eternal with the Father as God; for he holds his generation, that generation by which he was made a second person, to have been "when the Father pleased;" which was, when the work of creation was to be performed; and he distinctly states his divinity to be different to that of the Father.

I must say that I know not what advantage the orthodox cause can gain, by claiming the writer of these remarks as on its side. It appears to me impossible to explain these expressions as applying only to an inequality in the *order* of existence in the Persons of the Godhead; and it is somewhat remarkable that the passage in which he interprets Phil. ii. 7, at least that part of it which is objectionable, has usually been passed over

¹ Hoc ipsum tamen a Patre proprio consecutus, ut omnium et Deus esset et Dominus esset, et Deus ad formam Dei Patris ex ipso genitus atque prolatus. Hic ergo quamvis esset in forma Dei non est rapinam arbitratus æqualem se Deo esse. Quamvis enim se ex Deo Patre Deum esse meminisset, nunquam se Deo Patri aut comparavit aut contulit, memor se esse ex suo Patre, et hoc ipsum, quod est, habere se, quia Pater dedisset. Inde denique et ante carnis assumptionem, sed et post assumptionem corporis, post ipsam præterea resurrectionem, omnem Patri in omnibus rebus obedientiam præstitit pariter ac præstat. Ex quo probatur nunquam arbitratum illum esse rapinam quandam divinitatem, ut æquaret se Patri Deo: quinimo contra omni ipsius imperio et voluntati obediens atque subjectus etiam ut formam servi susciperet contentus fuit, &c. NOVAT. De Trin. c. 17. p. 734.

² Est ergo Deus, sed in hoc ipsum genitus ut esset Deus. Est et Dominus, sed in hoc ipsum natus ex Patre ut esset Dominus. c. 31.

by those who have attempted to vindicate this treatise as orthodox.

How, moreover, are we to reconcile with the orthodox doctrine those words of Methodius, where he calls the Son "the most ancient of æons, and the first of Archangels?"¹

And as to Lactantius, there can be no question about the matter, with a writer who can speak thus.—"Since God was most wise in designing, and most skilful in creating, before he commenced the creation of the world; since in him was the fountain of full and perfect good, as it is always; in order that from that good a stream might arise and flow widely abroad, he produced a Spirit similar to himself, who was endued with the qualities of God the Father. And how he did that, we shall endeavor to teach in the fourth book. Then he made another, in whom the disposition of the divine original did not remain. . . . Him the Greeks call διαβολος [devil,] we *criminator* [the accuser] . . . God, therefore, on commencing the fabric of the world, set that first and greatest Son over the whole work; and made use of him as at once his counsellor and artificer in planning, beautifying, and perfecting things; because he is perfect in forethought, and reason, and power."²

More may be found in him elsewhere to the same effect.³ It is useless to attempt to reconcile such statements with the orthodox doctrine, and so Bishop Bull admits.

Nay, what says Dr. Cave, who, perhaps, was as well entitled as any one to give a judgment in the case?—"The errors which are observable in his writings concerning the divinity and eternal existence of the Son, concerning the pre-existence of souls and a future state after this life, concerning the end of the world, and the thousand years reign, concerning the advent of Elias to turn many to the worship of God, and other points concerning which he has spoken obscurely, incautiously, and sometimes dangerously, will be excused by candid observers on account of *the ignorance of the age in which he lived about these things*, the abstruse

¹ Τον πρωτοτατον των αιωνων και πρωτον των Αρχαγγελων. METHOD. Conviv. decem virg. orat. 3a. § 4. Bibl. Patr. ed. Galland. tom. iii. p. 686.

² Cum esset Deus ad excogitandum prudentissimus, ad faciendum solertissimus, atqueam ordiretur hoc opus mundi: quoniam pleni et consummati boni fons in ipso erat, sicut est semper, ut ab eo bono tanquam rivus oriretur longæque profuisset, produxit similem sui spiritum, qui esset virtutibus Dei Patris præditus. Quomodo autem id fecerit, in quarto libro docere conabimur. Deinde fecit alterum in quo indoles divinæ stirpis non permansit . . . Hunc . . . Græci διαβολον appellant, nos criminatorem vocamus. . . . Exorsus igitur Deus fabricam mundi illum primum et maximum filium præfecit operi universo, eoque simul et consiliatore usus est, et artifice, in excogitandis, ornandis, perficiendisq; rebus, quoniam is et providentia et ratione et potestate perfectus est. LACTANTIUS. Instit. lib. 2. c. 8. ed. Cant. 1685. p. 84.

³ See Instit. lib. iv. cc. 6, &c.

nature of the doctrines not yet sufficiently clearly explained by theologians, nor defined by conciliar determinations, and *in which he had very many of the Fathers of the preceding ages in agreement with him.*"¹ Similar remarks respecting the Ante-Nicene Fathers are made by the learned Huetius in his *Origiana*.²

And to these I need hardly add the name of the still more learned Petavius. I shall not, indeed, undertake to defend all the observations made by him on this subject, and believe that his censures on the Ante-Nicene Fathers may have been too general, but I must also express my conviction that there is too much ground for many of his remarks, (in which, indeed, he is borne out by many other learned men,) and that it will be quite time enough for Mr. Newman to attack him as having "shown that he would rather prove the early Confessors and martyrs to be heterodox, than that they should exist as a court of appeal from the decisions of his own church," and having "sacrificed without remorse Justin, &c., and their brethren to the maintenance of the infallibility of Rome," (p. 74.) when he has exhibited one hundredth part of Petavius's ability, and learning, and acquaintance with the Fathers. What possible advantage, moreover, could the Romish cause gain by his showing that many of the ancient Fathers were unorthodox, when Rome vehemently professes to interpret Scripture only according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers, and to adhere to those traditions which are to be found in their writings? Surely Mr. Newman must see that a proof of the errors of the Ante-Nicene Fathers is anything but a proof of the infallibility of one who professes to follow them. Nor is there any foundation for the somewhat similar insinuations of Bishop Bull. It is evident, indeed, that the Romish cause is on the whole as much injured by the proof of such a fact as that of our opponents, for it utterly overthrows the hypothesis upon which their whole system rests, namely, that there was a development of the truth as delivered in the oral teaching of the Apostles, and fuller than what we find in the Scriptures, handed down by all the catholic Fathers from the time of the Apostles.

I will add one witness more, and that shall be one of the best of our opponents' own referees,—Bishop Stillingfleet.

"Suppose," says the Bishop, "the question be not concerning the express articles of this rule of faith, but concerning the sense and meaning of them, how then are we to find out the consent of antiquity? For they might all agree in the words, and yet have

¹ Cave Hist. Liter. sub nom. "Lactantius," vol. i. p. 162. See also his Articles on Origen and Eusebius.

² Lib. ii. q. 2. §§ 10, 14 and 25. In Op. Orig. ed. Ben. tom. iv.

a different notion of the things. *As Petavius at large proves, (Dogm. Theol. tom. ii. in Præf.) that there was an antient tradition for the substance of the doctrine of the Trinity, and yet he confesses that most of the writers of the antient church did differ in their explication of it from that which was only allowed by the Council of Nice. And he grants, (lib. i. c. 8. § 2.) that Arius did follow the opinion of many of the antients in the main of his doctrines, who were guilty of the same error that he was before the matter was thoroughly discussed. Here now arises the greatest difficulty to me in this point of tradition; the usefulness of it I am told is for explaining the sense of Scripture; but there begins a controversy in the church about the explication of the doctrine of the Trinity; I desire to know whether Vincentius his rules will help us here? It is pleaded by S. Hierome, (Apol. c. Ruffin. lib. ii.) and others, 'That the writers of the Church might err in this matter, or speak unwarily in it before the matter came to be thoroughly discussed.' If so, HOW COMES THE TESTIMONY OF ERRONEOUS OR UNWARY WRITERS TO BE THE CERTAIN MEANS OF GIVING THE SENSE OF SCRIPTURE? And in most of the controversies of the Church, this way hath been used to take off the testimony of persons who writ before the controversy began, and spake differently of the matter in debate. I do not deny the truth of the allegation in behalf of those persons, but to my understanding it plainly shows the incompetency of tradition for giving a certain sense of Scripture, when that tradition is to be taken from the writers of the foregoing ages; and if this had been the only way of confuting Arius, it is a great question how he could ever have been condemned if Petavius or S. Hierome say true."*¹

Moreover, if we are bound to suppose that all the Ante-Nicene Fathers nominally belonging to the catholic church were opposed to the views of Arius, how is it that all the bishops of the church did not oppose his heresy when first promulgated, which we find was far from being the case?² And, although the favourers of his views were in a very inconsiderable minority at Nice, yet in a very few years we find them the triumphant party. Views quite as unorthodox were, as we have seen, promulgated by Origen without any recorded judgment, as far as we know, of the church of his time and long after against them. In fact, whatever errors may have arisen in the church, such an

¹ Answer to several Treat. pp. 245, 6. Second edition 1674. Nor are his statements in his subsequent work on the doctrine of the Trinity contradictory to these remarks, for they are made with reference to those who looked upon Christ as a mere man, and do not assert any consent of Fathers for the full orthodox doctrine of the Trinity against Arian or Semiarian errors.

² See Sozomen. Hist. lib. i. c. 14.

assembly as a General Council would hardly have been tolerated before, and when error was patronized by some able and influential bishop, as for instance Origen, a condemnation even in a local Council was hardly to be expected. For the judgment at Nice we are indebted entirely to the interference of Constantine, who hoped by that means to put an end to the dispute. And much are we indebted to the first Christian Emperor, for providing us with such a *confirmation* of the orthodox faith as is to be found in the recorded judgment, given at Nice, of so many learned and venerable prelates from all parts of the world. But that all the prelates and doctors of the nominal Christian church for the three preceding centuries were precisely of the sentiments of the majority of this Council, is a supposition utterly unnecessary for any good purpose, improbable in theory, and contradicted by facts.

In selecting the extracts given above from the Ante-Nicene Fathers, I have endeavored to view the matter with an impartial eye, and to give those passages which should bring before the reader the real views of those Fathers on the point in question. Had it been my object merely to make out a case against them, it would have been easy to have made the charge appear still heavier. Nay, I will not hesitate to say, that without fully considering the circumstances of the times, and carefully comparing their expressions one with another, so as to judge from them as a whole, as far as we can, what their views really were, it would be impossible not to suppose them to have fallen more deeply into error than is here laid to their charge. And hence it is that such a plausible case has often been made out against them, and even by those who were themselves on the orthodox side. But I readily admit, that many such charges have been made without a sufficient foundation.

As it respects many of the passages quoted against them, though the words may be different to those which were afterwards used on the subject, and the expressions be even such as were afterwards carefully avoided by the orthodox, when it was found how they were wrested by heretics to an unorthodox meaning, yet the meaning of those who used them must be judged of by their general doctrine on the subject. And further with respect to many others, there is a misunderstanding in the case arising from men not fully comprehending the true nature of the orthodox doctrine. For instance, when the early Fathers speak of the Son ministering to the Father in the creation of the world, (using such words as *συνεργον*), it is sometimes intimated that this is opposed to that doctrine, whereas it is capable of a very orthodox interpretation, though, in after times, such phrases might be rejected by some from the use which had been made of them by heretics. For as

the Father is the Fountain of the Godhead, and alone self-existent and underived, so every act of the Godhead may be said to proceed originally from the Father, and to be performed through the ministration of the Son, who, as derived from the Father, may be said to minister to the Father in the performance of the act, as the stream dispenses the blessings derived from the fountain, (an imperfect but yet to a certain extent correct and useful similitude.) And as the essence of the stream is the same as that of the fountain, and all the goodness, virtues, and power residing in the fountain, are also in the stream, without any difference or inequality, so is it in the case of the Son compared with the Father. But few deny that as it respects the *source* and *order* of existence, the Father is prior to the Son. And according to this difference in the order of their existence, are we to contemplate the acts of the Godhead. With the Father, as the Source of the Godhead, *originate* all things. Hence it is said by Origen, that as it respects the Father, it would be said, all things were made *ὑπὸ πατρὸς*, but as it respects the Son, that all things were made *δι' αὐτοῦ*. And it would be unjust to accuse him of making the Son inferior to the Father by this, as it respects his *essence*.

I have already stated my belief that, as it respects the divinity of our Lord, against the Socinians, the testimony of the catholic Fathers that remain to us is unanimous, and I think their writings render it highly probable that *most* of them held the doctrine of his consubstantiality, and his being generated from the Father as one of the same essence with him, and not as one created by the Father. But I must add that it is impossible to establish the latter point without a nice and laborious critical investigation of the works of the Fathers, and an accurate comparison of the apparently discrepant statements often to be met with in the same Father, by which we may ascertain what in all *probability* his views really were. And with respect to some it is next to impossible to arrive at any certain conclusion, or at least we must suppose that either their works have been altered, or that their views were different at different times. Such is the case with Origen, who was accused by many who lived near his own time of having spoken of the Son erroneously. His orthodoxy, indeed, is a matter much disputed both in antient and modern times. And I must add, that in my humble judgment the evidence against him overwhelmingly preponderates. And the same must be said of Eusebius. And with respect to some of them there is no proof to be adduced either on one side or the other. And others must beyond doubt be given up.

What becomes then, I would ask, of the notion of our opponents, that a correct report of the full orthodox doctrine in all vital points, as delivered orally by the Apostles, was handed

down (so far as the subject is touched upon) by all the catholic writers of the primitive church? Instead of any such report, we find that very many of these writers spoke at least most unguardedly and incorrectly, as if they had imbibed error. Did the Apostles speak so? If not, how can we learn what the Apostles delivered from those who, even if their sentiments were orthodox, mangled and misrepresented the tradition they had received, so as to make their account of it look like error? Surely it is both unfair and unwise to boast of the consent of *all* the Fathers as a necessary part of the rule of faith in vital points, when the fact is, that if your reader goes to verify your statements, so far from finding any such consentient delivery of them, he finds many of these Fathers speaking, to say the least, most unguardedly and incorrectly, and others undeniably unorthodox.

And yet notwithstanding this, we are directed to this supposed consent,—a consent founded, as far as it is obtainable, upon a nice critical examination of apparently discrepant passages and incorrect and ambiguous statements,—as the only clear delivery of the fundamentals of the faith, the necessary and infallible interpreter of the word of God.

For my own part, so far from thinking that there is in these authors anything like a *consentient* delivery of the full orthodox doctrine in fundamental points, I believe there would be much danger in setting down one not well grounded in the faith as delivered in the Holy Scriptures to learn the faith from these authors; not from its not being delivered clearly in one or other of them, but from its being delivered by most imperfectly, and by others erroneously, and almost always mixed up with various strange notions and conceits.

Moreover, where we cannot establish catholic consent for the first three centuries we cannot establish it at all. The testimony of even the Nicene Council could *at most* establish the consent of that age for the doctrine; and not long after the Arian doctrine was affirmed by a General Council, where there were twice as many bishops present as were assembled at Nice. And how happens it, by the way, that we hear nothing of this latter Council, when the General Councils of the church are enumerated? When Augustine was arguing with an Arian, he admitted that his opponent's appeal to the latter Council would be as good as his own to that of Nice, and therefore that they must go to some other quarter to decide the matter, and that quarter was Scripture.¹

It is quite true that large demands are made upon us for our

¹ See August. contr. Maxim. lib. 2. c. 14.

belief that the Nicene Council and Athanasius claimed *catholic consent* for the doctrine established at Nice, and *decided everything by it*; but with how little reason I shall show hereafter.¹ And if they had claimed it, their claim would have been a mere claim, for proof of it they could not have. But the fact is that they did not make any such claim.

And this leads me to notice another fact which appears to me of considerable weight in this matter; viz. that the Fathers of the fourth and succeeding centuries had no such scruples about calling in question the orthodoxy of earlier Fathers, though they died in the communion of the church, as some have now, which nevertheless they must have felt if they had entertained this notion of catholic consent being part of the rule of faith. This is a fact, therefore, be it observed, which strongly affects two points. For it not only indicates that there was no such consent as is fancied, among the Fathers of the first three centuries, but also that the succeeding Fathers, who are appealed to by our opponents as supporting their views of tradition, held no such notions. It appears to me a proof of the latter point which it is utterly impossible to get rid of.

And now for the proof that they did so speak of some of the earlier Fathers. With respect to Origen, it will not be denied that the orthodoxy of his views was almost universally denied by these Fathers, and that Jerome, though originally taking his part, became afterwards his violent accuser, which certainly looks but ill for Origen's cause. Nay, even Dionysius of Alexandria, whom we have quoted above, as having in one place expressed the orthodox doctrine very clearly, is strongly reprehended by Basil and Gennadius on this head, notwithstanding that they must have been well aware of his Letter in his own defence to Dionysius of Rome, when called upon for an explanation of some of his statements, which indeed is expressly noticed by Basil. Thus is he spoken of by Basil; "As it respects your inquiries concerning the writings of Dionysius, they have reached us, and that in great numbers. But we have them not at hand, and therefore have not sent them. But our opinion is this. We do not admire all the writings of that man. And there are some which we altogether disapprove. For I might almost say, that of that impious heresy which is now so rife, I mean the Anomœan, he, as far as we know, was the first that supplied the seeds. But I think that the cause of this was not any error in his own views, but his vehement desire to oppose Sabellius. I am therefore in the habit of comparing him to a gardener straightening a young plant that

¹ See c. 10.

is bent, and by drawing it back too much missing the middle and leading away the plant in the contrary direction. Something like this we find to have happened to this man. For opposing vehemently the impiety of the Libyan, he was unconsciously carried himself into an opposite error by his vehement opposition; and when it was sufficient for him to show that the Father and Son were not the same subjectively,¹ and thus to gain the victory against the blasphemer, he, that he might most clearly triumph and gain more than a victory, not only lays down a distinction of hypostases, but also a difference of essence, and degrees of power, and diversity of glory.² So that it thus happened, that he exchanged one error for another, and erred from correct doctrine. Thus, then, he is inconsistent in his writings; at one time taking away the consubstantiality on account of him who used the term improperly so as to destroy the hypostases, at another time admitting it in what he wrote in his own defence to his namesake.³ Moreover, concerning the Spirit also, he has uttered language by no means suitable to the Spirit, *separating it from that God-head that is to be worshipped, and numbering it among inferior beings with created and ministrative nature.*⁴ Such is this man."⁵

Such is the testimony of Basil; and Gennadius of Marseilles calls him the fountain of the Arian heresy.⁶ Can it be denied, then, that even Dionysius of Alexandria wrote respecting the Son, so as apparently to support error; and that such a fact shows us that, instead of finding in the early Fathers an accurate report of Apostolical doctrine, we have often, even in the case of those who may have been orthodox, language very much opposed to it? They either held different sentiments at different times, or ex-

¹ Οὐ ταυτοὶ τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ Πατρὶ καὶ υἱός.

² Οὐχ ἰσότητά μοι οὐδὲ τῇ ὑπόστασιν τίθεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ οὐσίας διαφορὰν, καὶ δυνάμεις ὕψους καὶ δόξης παραλλάξιν.

³ Ταῦτα τοὶ καὶ πατέρωντος ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς συγγραμμάσιν, οὐ μὴ ἀναρῶν τὸ ὁμολογεῖν, διὰ τοῦ ἐπ' ἀδότησιν τῶν ὑποστάσεων κακῶς αὐτῶ καὶ χυρμῶν. οὐ δὲ περισσεύουσιν ἐν οὗτοι ἀπολογεῖται πρὸς τοὺς ὁμολογῶντας.

⁴ Πρὸς δὲ τούτοις καὶ τῇ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἀφῆκε φωνὰς, ἀκρίστα πρὸς τὰς τῷ Πνεύματι τῆς προσκυνουμένης αὐτοῦ θεότητος ἐξέρχων, καὶ κατασκευάζων τὴν κτίσιν καὶ λειτουργίαν αὐτῶν ἐν ἀριθμῶν. With this testimony it is difficult to know what to determine respecting the genuineness of the "Letter to Paul of Samosata," attributed to Dionysius, which on other grounds is, as Dr. Cave tells us, "suspected by many" (multis suspecta). The testimonies it contains to the true and proper divinity (in the highest sense of the term) of the Son and Holy Spirit are very strong and clear. If it be his, we must suppose either that the expressions here referred to by Basil were unintentionally incorrect, or that his views underwent some change.

⁵ Basil M. Ep. 8. Op. ed. Ben. tom. iii. pp. 90, 91.

⁶ Nihil creatum aut serviens in Trinitate credendum ut vult Dionysius fons Arian. Gennad. De eccles. dogmat. c. 4. Inter Op. Augustin. ed. Ben. tom. 8. App. col. 76.

pressed themselves so imperfectly and incorrectly, as to appear to support error, even when they did not intend it.

In the same condition with Dionysius stands Theognostus, who, although he is quoted by Athanasius, as supporting the doctrine of the Son's consubstantiality, is reprehended by Gregory Nyssen for very opposite doctrine. "Neither [says Gregory Nyssen] was Eunomius alone deceived in this, &c.; but we may find language equivalent to his in the books of Theognostus, who says that God, when he wished to construct the universe, first appointed his Son as a certain rule of workmanship."¹

The same charge is repeated, with various weighty additions, by Photius, who accuses him of calling the Son a creature (*κτίσμα*), and asserting that he has rule only over rational beings; and also of speaking, in an unorthodox way, of the Holy Spirit.²

So the work of Novatian on the Trinity above quoted, is accused by Rufinus (who attributes it to Tertullian) of being unorthodox on the subject of the Holy Spirit, and he charges the Macedonians with having exposed it for sale at a low price at Constantinople, under the name of Cyprian.³

And of Lactantius, we have (as the reader will remember) this account given us by Jerome. "Lactantius in his writings, and particularly in his letters to Demetrian, altogether denies the entity of the Holy Spirit; and, by a Jewish error, says that he is to be referred either to the Father or the Son; and that the holiness of each Person is pointed out under his name."⁴ And again; "MANY, through ignorance of the Scriptures, assert (as also Firmianus does in the eighth book of his Letters to Demetrian,) that the Father and Son are often called the Holy Spirit. And while we ought clearly to believe in a Trinity, they taking away the third Person, hold it to be not a hypostasis of the Trinity, but a name."⁵

And Augustine, having observed that to the Scriptures alone he had learned to give such honour as to suppose the writers of them certainly inerrable, adds, of all other writers,—“But others, however distinguished they may be for holiness and learning, I so read as not to think anything true, because they thought it to be so, but *because they are able to persuade me, either by those*

¹ Οὐ μόνος ἢ τούτῳ πεπλανήται κατὰ τὴν ἀπίστιν τοῦ δόγματος ὁ Εὐνομίος· ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ ἐν τοῖς Θεολογικοῖς πατρισματικῶς τοῖς ἰσοῦς ἔφησι τοὺς Θεοὺς βουλευμένοι τοὺς δὲ τοὺς πατρὶ κατὰσκευασαί, πρὸς τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ τὰ κανὼνα τῆς δημιουργίας προϋποθέσθαι. Contr. Eunom. Orat. 3a. tom. ii. p. 132. ed. 1615.

² Photii Biblioth. Art. 107. col. 280. ed. 1653.

³ Apol. pro. Orig. Inter Op. Orig. ed. Ben. tom. 4. App. p. 53. Jerome corrects him in his reply, as far as respects the name of the author, intimating that it was known to be Novatian's.

⁴ See p. 195. above.

⁵ See p. 195. above.

*canonical authors, or by some probable reason, that it is agreeable to the truth."*¹

Now, had Augustine held our opponents' doctrine of "catholic consent," here would have been the fairest possible opportunity for enforcing it; indeed, it would have been impossible for him to have passed it over; but, on the contrary, he tells us that he receives no doctrine from any other source but the Scriptures, except by being persuaded of its truth, either by arguments drawn from the Scriptures, or by reason.

We see, then, that these Fathers made no scruple to find fault with the Fathers that preceded them, and to accuse them of heterodoxy, even on fundamental points; and even where they indulged the hope that the heterodoxy of their writings was rather the result of haste or carelessness, or the desire of victory over their opponents, than their own convictions, they hesitated not to pronounce them to be very unfit guides, on account of that inaccuracy in their statements. How is it, then, that we are now requested to take for granted—aye, and that even upon the authority of these very Fathers of the fourth and succeeding centuries—that all the catholic writers of the first three centuries must have held the faith correctly in all fundamental points; and moreover, must have expressed it so correctly in their writings, that their *consent* is, in fundamentals, a necessary and infallible guide in the interpretation of Scripture?

It is quite true that these Fathers may have held, and probably did hold, that there had been in the church a succession of those who had delivered the true doctrine. And so do we. And hence it is that we admit the principle, that if you take all the remains of the primitive church for the first few centuries, (our church seems generally held to include about the first five centuries,) you will find among them a correct statement of the true orthodox doctrine in all fundamental and important points. And thus those writings constitute a useful practical check against the inroads of error, of Popish novelties, and fanatical conceits. But the notion of our being able to obtain catholic consent for the whole orthodox faith, or even the consent of the Fathers that remain to us after the assiduous weeding that the patristical writings have in all probability undergone, and which has left us, out of the "*innumerable*" authors of the first three centuries, the mutilated remains of about twenty, is both utterly opposed to the statements of the Fathers themselves, and never could

¹ *Alios autem ita lego, ut quantalibet sanctitate doctrinaque præpolleant, non ideo verum putem quia ipsi ita senserunt, sed quia mihi vel per illos auctores canonicos, vel probabili ratione, quod a vero non abhorreat, persuadere potuerunt. Epist. ad Hieron. 82. (al. 19.) Tom. 2. col. 190. ed. Bened.*

dwell for a moment in the mind of any one fully acquainted with their writings, and viewing them with an impartial eye. It may be a very pretty theory viewed at a distance, but it will not stand the test of examination. There is hardly one, perhaps not one, single point of doctrine now controverted, in which an adversary of the orthodox doctrine could not bring forward some *plausible* patristical evidence in his favour.

How, I would ask, is it possible to deny this, when we see such a man as Photius, whose learning, judgment, extensive reading, and varied qualifications for pronouncing an opinion, are undeniable,¹ sitting down to give an account of the writings of the Fathers, which he possessed apparently to a much greater extent than are now extant, and accusing one and another of them of erroneous statements in the most fundamental points?² To attribute this to want of judgment and power of discrimination is out of the question. Against the practice of judging from insulated passages he particularly protests.³ To attribute it to partiality is equally unreasonable, for what object had he to gain by running them down? None. How, then, are we to account for it? Clearly from the fact that these Fathers have expressed themselves most erroneously; and if, in the judgment of charity, we can hope that they did not entertain the sentiments they appear to have expressed, but that their expressions are to be set down to carelessness, or a desire of victory over their opponents, it is, as Photius says, but a very poor defence,⁴ and certainly disqualifies them from being considered safe guides, and shuts out the possibility of catholic consent.

To say the least, then, I would ask, When learned men, even on the orthodox side, are disagreed on the question of the orthodoxy of these Fathers, even in fundamentals; when it is allowed by all to require much consideration, and a nice balancing of seemingly opposite passages, to arrive at the sentiments of these authors; when it is a common saying that the Fathers often thought more correctly than they spoke,⁵ which is just the expression of a charitable hope, that though their writings seem to defend error, they did not mean to do so, and shows how little fitted their writings are to be a standard of appeal; when it is

¹ Cave, speaking of his *Bibliotheca*, to which work I am here alluding more particularly, says,—“Opus in quo ingenii acumen, judicii gravitatem, legentis industriam an lectionis varietatem quis magis admiratur haud facile dixerim.” *Hist. Lit.* ii. p. 48.

² See his observations on Origen, Theognostus, Pierius, Methodius, &c.

³ See his *Biblioth.* Art. 225 on Eulogius, col. 761. ed. 1653.

⁴ Phot. *Biblioth.* Art. 107. De Theognosto, col. 280. ed. 1653.

⁵ Jam dudum observarunt Docti, Patres sæpenumero rectius sensisse quam locutos fuisse. Lumper. *Hist. Crit. Patr.* vol. 3. p. 157.

allowed that some of them must be admitted to have spoken very indiscreetly and incorrectly, and some are altogether given up, is it not preposterous to talk of catholic consent as the necessary and infallible interpreter of Scripture, and even part of the rule of faith? Is it not absurd to maintain that there is a consentient testimony in the Fathers on such points, delivering the faith more clearly than the Scripture? And it is worth remarking, that it was upon the testimony of these very Fathers that Dr. Clark and Mr. Whiston grounded their unorthodox notions on this subject, and indeed from them they appear to have *derived* them.

It is, I admit, a disappointment to find such inaccuracies and discrepancies, even in the highest points of faith, in the few remains that have come down to us of the earliest instructors of the Christian church. It renders the argument from them, as far as those discrepancies extend, very different to what it would have been had we found them giving a clear consentient testimony to the full orthodox faith.

Nor can it be justly urged that the unorthodox statements of a few of the Fathers are of no moment, because compared with the small number that remain to us, they are an important part of the whole. It is easy to say that a few authors are as nothing compared with the sentiments of the great body of the church; but unfortunately we have only the testimony of a few authors as to what those sentiments were, and consequently a discrepancy in the statements of those that remain leaves us altogether uncertain in the matter.

Now I am quite aware that there will be some who will be very impatient at any attempt to show that there is no consent of Fathers even on points of the greatest moment. Of such I would merely beg to ask one question,—Of what possible consequence can it be to us that out of some twenty or twenty-five authors that *happen* to remain to us of the primitive church, there are a few that seem very much to have misapprehended the truth in some important points? That it prevents our having anything that we can call an infallible rule by which to bind the consciences of men to believe more than Scripture reveals, or to believe that any certain patristical interpretation of Scripture is infallibly true, is not to be denied. And this to those who love to wield the sceptre of authority over others, is no doubt irksome. But I cannot see any cause for alarm in it, or that it exposes the truth to any danger. Here are certain philosophizing Christians, converts perhaps from Paganism, speaking very incorrectly upon points connected with the doctrine of the Trinity. What then? Is it any matter for surprise? What may have passed upon the subject in the primitive church we know

not. And if we did know, circumstances may easily have precluded any general or even synodical expression of feeling on the matter. Why we should labour and toil to show that they did not mean what their expressions seem to imply, or that their writings must be corrupted, or why we should suppose the truth endangered by their errors, I know not. I think we may venture to affirm, that even in modern times very dangerous tenets may be propagated by writers without the church moving to condemn them. At any rate, my opponents cannot condemn me for quoting these passages, for their theory is, that the truth is delivered obscurely in Scripture, but clearly in the Fathers. They cannot surely then object to men being made acquainted with those clear expositions (as they think them) of the orthodox faith. If they are so clear they can do no harm, though quoted by one who is dull enough to misapprehend them.

Having entered so fully into the evidence against any supposed consent of the Fathers in the very highest points, I shall be more brief as it respects the others I purpose noticing.

To go through all the points on which even the Fathers that remain to us are divided in sentiment, would be to go through almost all, if not all, the points of Christian doctrine, except perhaps such as are *in so many words* laid down in the Apostles' Creed. I will instance, however, a few.

And first, the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. It will not, I conceive, be denied, that to obtain any clear evidence in favour of this doctrine from the works of the Ante-Nicene Fathers is impossible, and that, with the exception of such passages as that of Origen quoted above, in which the Holy Spirit is represented as being one of the things made by the Son,¹ wherever the relation of the Holy Spirit to the other Persons of the Godhead is mentioned, the expressions used would rather favour the doctrine maintained by the Greek Church of the procession from the Father only. And when the point came to be discussed, there was a great division of opinion on the subject, the majority apparently holding the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father *and the Son*, but others, as Theodoret, maintaining that the Spirit proceeded from the Father only. Thus Theodoret says,—“That the Spirit is the Spirit of the Son, if he [i. e. Cyril] means as of the same nature, and proceeding from the Father, we confess it too, and receive it as an orthodox saying; but if he means it in the sense of his being from the Son, or as having his subsistence through the Son, we shall reject this as blasphemous and

¹ See p. 193 above.

impious."¹ And it is maintained by the adherents of this doctrine in the Greek Church, that this is the true catholic doctrine of the church. Thus Michael Psellus, who wrote in the eleventh century, says,—“The holy and catholic church holds that the Spirit proceeds from the Father only, and not from the Son.”²

And certainly *as far as patristical testimony is concerned*, it forms a strong negative argument in favour of those who deny the procession from the Son, that the Creed as agreed upon at the Council of Constantinople, had only the words, “who proceedeth from the Father;” the words “and the Son” having been added long after by the Latins.³

Others of the Greek Fathers appear to have approached nearer the doctrine of the Latin church in this point than Theodoret, but hardly any of the antient Greek Fathers, as far as I am aware, held properly the procession from the Son.

This surely is another proof that the notion that there was a full and correct report of all the important doctrines of Christianity handed down by the consentient testimony of the Fathers of each age is a mere dream of the imagination, completely disproved by the facts of the case.

The same may be said of the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies. The defenders of these heresies stoutly maintained that the primitive Fathers were in their favour, as we shall hereafter show; and this appeal, in the absence of the testimonies they adduced, it is but idle to treat as the mere falsehood of heretics. Nay, Theodoret, one of the most learned of the Greek Fathers, when denying the hypostatical union of the divine and human natures in Christ, which was the very essence of the Nestorian heresy, says, “the hypostatical union we altogether reject, as outlandish and foreign to the divine Scriptures *and the Fathers who have interpreted them.*”⁴

Let us next inquire whether these Fathers bore a consentient testimony on the points connected with what are now called Pelagian errors. So far from it, that we find many passages in them very pointedly in favour of those errors.

¹ Ἰδὲν δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Ὑίου, ἢ μὴ ὡς ὁμοφυς καὶ ἐκ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευομένην εἶναι, συνομολογεσθῆναι, καὶ ὡς ἐστὶν διδόμεθα τὴν φωνήν· ἢ δὲ ὡς ἐξ Ὑίου, ἢ δὲ Ὑίου τὴν ὑπαρξίν εἶναι, ὡς βλασφημίαν τοῦτο καὶ ὡς δυσσεβὲς ἀπορριβόμεν. THEODORET. Repr. Anathem. Cyrill. adv. Anath. 9. Op. tom. v. p. 47. ed. Schulze.

² Ἡ ἀγία καὶ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία δογματίζει τὸ πνεῦμα ἐκ μουτοῦ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ ἐκ τοῦ Ὑίου. Cap. Theol. c. 10. p. 157.

³ See Pearson on the Creed, Art. 8, (pp. 486, 7. Dobeon) and Burton's Testim. to Doctr. of Trin. p. 144.

⁴ Τὴν καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἡμεῖς παντάπασιν ἀγνοοῦμεν, ὡς ἕστη καὶ ἀλλοφυλοῖ τῶν θεῶν γραφῶν καὶ τῶν ταύτας ἡμικτυομένων πατέρων. THEODORET. Repr. Anathem. Cyrill. Op. tom. v. p. 10. Schulze. And see the observations of Garnier, ib. pp. 464 and 476, &c.

Thus Clement of Alexandria, when disputing against the Tatianists, says, "Let them tell us where the newborn infant hath committed fornication, or how *one who has done nothing hath fallen under Adam's curse*,"¹ where in effect the doctrine of original sin is clearly denied.

As it respects the doctrine of freewill, it is notorious that the early Fathers have often expressed themselves most erroneously on the subject. It is satisfactory, however, to be able to add that *most* of them have done so inconsistently with their own statements in other passages. On this matter I know not that I can do better than quote the following passage from the learned Bishop Morton, which probably contains a fair and just view of the case, and to which I the rather refer the reader, because Bishop Morton is not only an able judge on the point, but also one of our opponents' favourite witnesses. In his reply to the Romish Apologie, in which a sarcastic allusion had been made to the complaints of the Protestants as to the erroneous statements of some of the Fathers on this point, he speaks thus,—"*The censure which the judicious Protestants have passed upon antient authors is not an universal taxation of all, but yet of many.* Now, if the Apologists had not in this their opposition rather affected (as may be feared) seducement than judgment, they might have taught their reader from their own Sixtus Senensis, and from three of their principal Jesuits, that in the root of the doctrine of freewill, 'Chrysostom, Cyril, Theophylact, Euthymius, Cæcumenius, Ammonius, and most of others, especially in the Greek church, did yield too much unto the power of nature in the free will of man.' And in this and other doctrines of affinity therewith did seem to have 'inclined, contrarie unto Scripture, unto the error of the Pelagians.' Wherein we easily perceive with what prejudice the Apologists have been transported thus to traduce Protestants as being injurious in that taxation, wherein by the judgment of their own Jesuits *they stand justifiable unto every conscience of man.* Nevertheless we do not so judge the Fathers as herein *damnably erroneous*, but *so far excuse them*, as we shall be able to show, that the censured Fathers were but inconstantly erroneous in their doctrine of Freewill, who did often deliver unto us concerning it most wholesome receipts. The Protestant authors, viz. the Centurists and Scultetus in the places alleged by the Apologists, have particularly and by name observed that Justinus, Irenæus, Clemens, Tertullian,

¹ Διγρυπῶσαι ἡμῖν, που ὁπορεύσῃ το γέννηθαι παιδίον, ἢ πως ὑπο τοῦ τοῦ Ἀδάμ ὑποκατασταῖται ἀπὸ το μηδὲν ἀφῆλτον. Strom. lib. iii. pp. 556, 7. ed. Potter. And if we are to suppose that the work called "Hypotyposes," attributed to him, and mentioned by Photius, was really his, he is chargeable with statements far more unorthodox than this

Origen, Cyprian, and others, albeit *MANY TIMES they pleaded for the freewill of the corrupt nature of man*, yet were they *SOMETIME* reduced unto the more orthodoxal hold, writing thereof more commodiously." And he adds his belief that "the occasion of this difference" was "a whirlwind of contrary heresies," "for the overthrow of which *some Fathers did contrarily yield too much unto the power of the will.*"¹

This passage presents us, I believe, with the true state of the case, drawn by one inclined to take a charitable and favourable view of what the Fathers have delivered, but never dreaming of the notion that their consent was part of the rule of faith, and a necessary guide to the right interpretation of Scripture, and therefore giving an impartial view of their statements.² And it is obvious that if this passage gives us at all a correct view of the case, it is absurd to think of deriving any thing like a consentient testimony from them in favour of the orthodox doctrine, when they have contradicted themselves in the matter, and some of them spoken more frequently in favour of the erroneous than of the orthodox doctrine. That there is a testimony in them in favour of the orthodox doctrine is a proposition *for which we contend*, but that there is a consistent and consentient testimony pervading the whole of them is what we wholly deny, and what is altogether opposed to the plain facts of the case. And thus again, in this most important point, instead of obtaining in them a sure interpreter of Scripture and judge of controversies, we are *compelled* to make Scripture the judge of their controversies, and even the judge between the contradictory statements of the same individual.

I will give one more example on this head, viz. the interesting and important question as to the intermediate state of the souls of the just between death and the resurrection. And as it is a point which has been less fully discussed than those already mentioned, and which can hardly fail to be interesting to the reader, I will enter more at large into it, especially as it is a remarkable instance how clearly and strongly a doctrine may be laid down by primitive Fathers, and defended by a large body of them, which yet was not held by others, and consequently a proof how easily we may be deceived when concluding, that because a doctrine was held by those whose works *happen* to remain, that is, by those of them who have mentioned the subject, therefore, it must have been held by the universal church.

¹ MORTON'S *Catholic Appeal for Protestants*, pp. 201, 2.

² This view is abundantly confirmed by our learned Dr. Whitaker, in his *Treatise, De peccato originali*, lib. ii. c. 2, but Bishop Morton is one of our opponents' own witnesses for the doctrine of our church on this whole subject.

On this point then—viz. the intermediate state of the souls of the just between death and the resurrection—

We find Irenæus thus speaking;—"Since the Lord departed to the valley of the shadow of death [alluding apparently to *Psa. xxiii. 4.*] *where the souls of the dead were*, and then afterwards rose in the body, and after his resurrection was taken up; it is manifest that the souls of his disciples also, on whose account the Lord did these things, go away to the place [*or, invisible place*] appointed for them by God, and there dwell until the resurrection, awaiting the resurrection; and then having had their bodies restored to them, and risen perfectly, that is, with their bodies, even as the Lord arose, shall thus come to the vision of God."¹ And in the context, he calls the opinions of those who supposed that the souls of believers enjoyed the vision of God immediately after their death heretical.

The same doctrine is delivered by Justin Martyr, who in his Dialogue with Trypho, says, that "the souls of the pious remain somewhere in a better sort of place, and the unjust and wicked souls in a worse, awaiting the time of the judgment."² And he, like Irenæus, classes the doctrine that the souls of the just are immediately received into heaven among the notions of the heretics;—"If," he says, "ye meet with some who are called Christians, who do not admit this, [*i. e. the doctrine of the millennium*] and who say that there is no resurrection of the dead, but that *as soon as they die, their souls are taken up into heaven*, you must not suppose them to be Christians."³ Here, doubtless, the gravamen of the heresy was in denying the resurrection, but nevertheless, the doctrine that the souls of the just are received at once into heaven, is part of the doctrine here reprehended as heretical.

So, also, Tertullian. "But if Christ, who was God, because he was also man, having died according to the Scriptures, and been buried according to the same, complied also with this law,

¹ Quam enim Dominus in medio umbræ mortis abierit, ubi animæ mortuorum erant, post deinde corporaliter resurrexit, et post resurrectionem assumptus est, manifestum est quia et discipulorum ejus, propter quos et hæc operatus est Dominus, aī ψυχαι ἀπῄχονται ἐς τὸν τόπον [*invisibilem locum, Vet. Lat. int.*] τὸν ὁρισμένον αὐταῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ μετὰ τῆς ἀναστάσεως φοιτῶσι, περιμένονσαι τὴν ἀνάστασιν σφίται ἀπολαμβάνουσαι τὰ σώματα, καὶ ὁλοκληρῶς ἀναστῆναι, τούτου σωματικῶς, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Κύριος ἀνῆστη, οὕτως αὐλοῦσονται ἐν τῇ οἰᾷ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Iren. lib. v. c. 31. (p. 331. ed. Mass.) There is also a passage, lib. v. c. 5. (p. 298.) which seems of similar import.

² Τὰς μὲν τῶν κατὰ τὸν πῶτον χρόνον ποιῶντων μὲν, τὰς δὲ ἀδικούντων ποτὶ τὴν χειρὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ κριτικῶς ἀνδραχόμενας χρόνον τότε [ποτὶ Thirlb.] Justin. Dial. cum Tryph. § 5. p. 107. ed. Bened.

³ Εἰ γὰρ καὶ συνβάλατε ὑμᾶς τίτι λεηλαμένους Χριστιανούς, καὶ τοῦτο μὴ ὁμολογεῖσθαι, οἱ καὶ λεγούσι μὴ εἶναι νεκροὶ ἀναστῆναι, ἀλλὰ ἅμα τῷ ἀποθνήσκειν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἀναλαβεῖσθαι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, μὴ ὑπολαμβάνετε αὐτοὺς Χριστιανούς. Id. ib. § 80. p. 178.

having put on the appearance of human death in these lower regions; and did not ascend to the heights of the heaven before he descended to the lower parts of the earth, that he might make the Patriarchs and Prophets there partakers of his presence, you have also to believe a subterraneous region in the lower parts of the earth, and drive away those who proudly enough think that the souls of the faithful deserve a better abode than the lower regions; being truly servants above their Lord, and disciples above their Master, disdaining perhaps to receive in the bosom of Abraham the comfort of an expected resurrection. Heaven is open to none while the earth remains safe, not to say closed. For the kingdom of heaven will be opened with the passing away of the world. You have also a little treatise on Paradise, written by us, in which we have resolved, that every soul is set apart in the lower regions against the day of the Lord."¹ And further on in the same treatise,—“Are therefore all souls kept in the lower regions? You speak rightly. Be you willing or unwilling, there are now there both torments and delights.”²

And again, elsewhere, with a mere *verbal* difference as to the use of the phrase, “lower regions,” he says, “Whence it is evident to every wise man that there is a certain place which is called the bosom of Abraham, set apart for the reception of the souls of his children, even of the Gentiles . . . that that place therefore, I mean the bosom of Abraham, which, although not in heaven, is yet above the lower regions, will in the meantime afford refreshment to the souls of the just until the consummation of things shall bring about the resurrection of all in the fulness of the reward.”³

¹ Quod si Christus Deus, quia et homo, mortuus secundum Scripturas et sepultus secus easdem, huic quoque legi satisfecit, forma humanæ mortis apud inferos functus; nec ante ascendit in sublimiora cælorum quam descendit in inferiora terrarum, ut illic Patriarchus et Prophetas compotes sui faceret, habes et regionem inferum subterraneam credere, et illos cubito pellere qui satis superbe non putant animas fidelium inferis dignas: servi super Dominum, et discipuli super Magistrum, aspernati si forte in Abraham sinu expectandæ resurrectionis solatium capere . . . Nulli patet cælum terra adhuc salva, ne dixerim clausa. Cum transactione enim mundi reserabuntur regna cælorum . . . Habes etiam de Paradiso a nobis libellum, quo constituimus omnem animam apud inferos sequestrari in diem Domini. *TEXTUL. De Anima*. c. 55. p. 304. ed. 1664.

² Omnes ergo animæ penes inferos? Inquis. Velis ac nolis et supplicia jam illie et refrigeria. *Id. ib.* c. 58. p. 306.

³ Unde apparet sapienti cuique . . . esse aliquam localem determinationem, quæ sinus dicta sit Abraham ad recipiendas animas filiorum ejus, etiam ex nationibus . . . Eam itaque regionem, sinum dico Abraham, etsi non cælestem, sublimiorem tamen inferis, interim refrigerium præbituram animabus justorum donec consummatio rerum resurrectionem omnium plenitudine mercedis expungat. *Id. adv. Marc. lib. iv.* c. 34. pp. 450, 451.

Other similar passages may be found in his writings.¹

There is also a passage of Clement of Alexandria, which seems to show that he held the same view, where he speaks of "the expected resurrection, *when* at the end of the world the angels shall receive the truly penitent into the heavenly tabernacles . . . and before all the Saviour himself meets him with a kind reception, affording light, cloudless and eternal, leading him to the bosom of the Father, to eternal light, to the kingdom of heaven."²

Thus also Origen.—"For not even the Apostles," he says, "have yet received their joy, but themselves also wait for it, that I also may become a partaker of their joy. For neither the saints, when they depart hence, receive immediately the full reward of their deserts, but wait for us You see, therefore, that Abraham yet waits for the attainment of that which is perfect. And Isaac waits, and Jacob, and all the Prophets wait for us, that they may enjoy with us perfect happiness. On this account, therefore, even that mystery is kept to the last day of the deferred judgment."³ And again he says, elsewhere, "It is my opinion that all the saints that depart from this life shall remain in a certain place in the earth, which the divine Scripture calls Paradise, as in a place of instruction."⁴

In the immediate context of this last passage, however, he seems to intimate that their stay in this place is longer or shorter, according to their deserts; and that they gradually ascend through a succession of such places to heaven; which is not very reconcileable with the former passage, and is a specimen of what we so often meet with in several of the Fathers; namely, that self-contradiction, which makes it almost impossible, and sometimes quite impossible, to tell what their real views were.

¹ See TERTULL. Apologet. c. 47. p. 37. Scorp. c. 12. p. 498.

² Αναστασις ἐπιζώνων, ὅταν ἐν τῇ συντάμῃ τοῦ αἰῶνος, οἱ ἀγγέλοι τοὺς ἀληθῶς μετανοήσαντας δεξάνται ὡς ἐπουρανίους σκῆπας, . . . προ δὲ πάντων αὐτοῦ ὁ Σωτὴρ προπαρατα δεξιούμενος, ὅς ἐστιν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπαισίου, ἰδύμενος ὡς τοὺς κόλπους τοῦ Πατρὸς, καὶ τὴν αἰωνίαν ζωὴν, καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. CLEM. ALEX. Quis Dives salvetur. *ad fin.* ed. Potter, pp. 960, 961.

³ Nondum enim receperunt lætitiā suā ne Apostoli quidem, sed et ipsi expectant, ut et ego lætitiæ eorum particeps fiam. Neque enim decedentes hinc sancti, continuo integrā meritorum suorum præmia consequuntur; sed expectant etiam nos . . . Vides ergo quia expectat adhuc Abraham, ut quæ perfectæ sunt consequatur. Expectat et Isaac, et Jacob, et omnes Prophætæ expectant nos ut nobiscum perfectam beatitudinem capiant. Propter hæc ergo etiam mysterium illud in ultimam diem dilecti iudicii custoditur. ORIG. Hom. 7. in Levit. § 2. tom. 2. p. 222. See also Hom. 26 in Num. § 4. p. 372.

⁴ Puto enim quod sancti quique discedentes de hac vita permanebunt in loco aliquo in terra posito, quem paradisum dicit Scriptura divina, velut in quodam eruditionis loco. ORIG. De Princip. lib. 2. ad fin. c. xi. § 6. tom. 1 p. 106. ed. Ben.

However, as it respects the point now in question, his view is evidently, to a certain extent at least, agreeable to that of the Fathers already quoted.

The last I shall quote is Lactantius, who thus delivers the same doctrine.—“Nor let any one think that souls are judged immediately after death. For all are kept in one common place of custody, until the time comes when the great Judge will make inquiry into their deserts.”¹

To these authorities, various others might be added, both of those who lived during the first three centuries, and of the best writers of the succeeding times; insomuch that it has been represented as a doctrine in which all the primitive writers consented.

I would observe, also, that a *full description* of the place of abode of the spirits of the departed, is given in a fragment of a work on the universe, attributed to various authors, but more particularly to Caius.² Whence the writer got his information, he does not tell us.³

We shall find, however, that it only affords us a proof how clearly and strongly many of the primitive Fathers may deliver a doctrine on an important point, (for such, unquestionably, is the one before us,) and even rank the opposite doctrine among heretical notions; when, nevertheless, there were men of equal authority in the church, who held that opposite view; and consequently how impossible it is on such points, with the few remains we have of the primitive Fathers, to lay claim to Catholic consent on one side or the other.

It so happens that there are two Fathers in this period, in whom we find passages very clearly conveying the opposite doctrine.

The first is Ignatius, who, in his Epistle to the Romans, says, in the prospect of his martyrdom, “Suffer me to become the food of wild beasts, through whom it is in my power to attain the presence of God.”⁴

¹ Nec tamen quisquam putet, animas post mortem protinus judicari. Nam omnes in una communione custodia detinentur, donec tempus adveniat, quo maximus iudex meritorum faciat examen. LACTANTIUS. Institut. lib. 7. § 21. p. 396. ed. Cant. 1685.

² See the fragm. in the notes of Hoeschel. on Photius, pp. 10, 11; or in Hippol. Op. ed. Fabric. And see respecting it, Phot. Cod. 48. Col. 36., and Routh Reliq. Sacr. vol. 2. pp. 31, 2.

³ Tertullian in his Treatise *De anima*, and the Author of the *Quæst. ad orthed.* attributed to Justin Martyr (quæst. 75, 76, 85,) venture upon the strange notion that the place of happy departed souls, is the paradise in which Adam was; another instance of the way in which the Fathers' statements oppose each other in such points.

⁴ Ἀποτί με θάρσιν ὡς ἐρπας, δι' οὗ ἐννοήσω Θεοῦ ἐπιτυχῶν. Ignatii Ep. ad Rom. § 4.

And again, still more clearly,—“The living water . . . says within me, ‘Come to the Father.’”¹

The other is Cyprian.—“How great,” he says, “is the honor, and how great the security, to go hence joyful; to depart in triumph amidst afflictions and troubles! to shut in one moment the eyes with which men and the world were seen, and to open them immediately that *God may be seen*, and Christ! How great the speed of the happy journey! You are suddenly taken from the earth, that you may be placed in a state of rest in *the heavenly kingdom*.”²

There are some other passages in Cyprian, which intimate the same view.

And were we to proceed beyond the first three centuries, we should find the same view maintained by Epiphanius,³ Ambrose,⁴ (though perhaps inconsistently with himself in other parts,⁵) and others.⁶

It is evident, then, that these Fathers held the doctrine which the others repudiated, viz. that disembodied souls go at once to heaven, and enjoy, previous to the resurrection, the beatific vision of the Father. It is possible that other passages may be found in the writings of this period of a similar kind, but certainly the testimony in favour of this view will be found to be small, compared with that we have for the opposite. I enter not here into the question, which doctrine has the best claim upon our belief. That is beside our present subject. But the case clearly shows that even on such points, and where the doctrine of one side at least was very emphatically laid down as the only true doctrine, the Fathers widely differed. And it also shows how easily we might have the appearance of catholic consent in the writings that remain to us, where there was not really catholic consent. For had it so happened that these two or three passages, which express a doctrine contrary to that which is so clearly delivered by the majority, had been lost, we should have been told that we were opposing catholic consent,

ed. Jacobs, tom. ii, pp. 352, 4. A similar expression occurs § 2. p. 348, and § 9. p. 368.

¹ ὁ ζῶν . . . πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας, ἄνω πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα. Ib. §. 7. pp. 364—6.

² Quanta est dignitas et quanta securitas exire hinc lætum, exire inter pressuras et angustias gloriosum, claudere in momento oculos quibus homines videbantur et mundus, et aperire eodem statim ut *Deus videatur* et Christus! Jam feliciter migrandi quanta velocitas! Terris repente subtraheris ut *in regnis celestibus* reponaris. CYPRIAN. De exhort. mart. ad fin. ed. Pamel.

³ Adv. hær. in hæc. 78. Antidicomar. § 24. Tom. 1. p. 1056.

⁴ De fide lib. 4. cc. 1, 2.

⁵ See Admon. ed. Bened. in libr. De bono mortis. Ambros. Op. Tom. 1. col. 385. et seq.

⁶ See King on the Creed, pp. 204—22. 4th. ed. 1719.

and the doctrine of the Apostles, in saying what these authors have said, and what, for aught we know, hundreds and thousands held in the primitive church, and many perhaps have published.

The confession of the Benedictine Editors of Ambrose on this subject is so remarkable and instructive, that I here subjoin it. "It is not, indeed, surprising," they say, "that Ambrose should have written in this way concerning the state of souls; but it may appear almost incredible *how uncertain and inconsistent the holy Fathers, from the very times of the Apostles to the Pontificate of Gregory XI. and the Council of Florence*, that is, for almost the whole of fourteen centuries, were on this point. For not only does one differ from another, *as generally happens in questions of this kind before they are decided by the church*; but they are not even consistent with themselves; for in some places of their writings they seem to concede the clear vision of the Divine nature to the same souls to which in other places they deny it. But it is not to our purpose here to collect together those opposing testimonies of the ancient Fathers. Any one who wishes to know more on this matter may consult Alph. a Castro, (lib. 3, adv. hæc.) Sixtus Senensis, (Bibl. l. 6. Annot. 345.), Bellarmine, (lib. 1. De Beat. c. 1, et seq.), Petavius (Theolog. dogm. de Deo, c. 13 and 14), and others. We here only observe, that all that contrariety sprung from the different ideas (principiis) which *the reading of the Holy Scriptures supplied to those holy men.*"

The reader will here observe, then, that so far from "the church" deciding agreeably to the *consent* of the preceding Fathers, it is admitted that there is no such thing as consent to be looked for until "the church" has decided, and that the early Fathers gathered their views, not from tradition, but from Scripture; conclusions which, though not perhaps in the mind of the authors of this passage, clearly flow from it.

Further; as the Fathers thus differ in their doctrinal statements both from one another and from themselves, so, as might be expected, and as it is hardly necessary to add, do they differ in the interpretation they give to the Scriptures when commenting upon them, and that even in the case of the most important texts.

I will give some instances of this, and none are more pertinent than those commonly adduced in proof of this point. But it will be easy to add to them, if necessary, though but for the necessity of showing the groundlessness of the ill-advised claims made by

¹ Admon. in Ambros. libr. De bono mortis. Tom. 1. col. 385, 6.

our opponents, one would willingly have passed them all over in silence.

(1.) Prov. viii. 22. The Lord possessed (*Sept.* created) me in the beginning of his way before his works of old.

This passage is, by most of the Ante-Nicene Fathers that remain to us, applied to the divine generation of the Son. Thus, for instance, it is applied by (among others) Justin Martyr,¹ Athenagoras,² Clement of Alexandria,³ and Tertullian.⁴ But Irenæus applies it to the Holy Spirit.⁵ And when afterwards the Arians used it as favourable to their cause, it was generally applied by the orthodox Fathers to the generation of the human nature of Christ. That this is its proper meaning is very decisively laid down by Athanasius⁶ and Augustine;⁷ and the same meaning is attached to it by Basil⁸ and Epiphanius,⁹ *if the passage is applied to Christ at all*, though the latter gives his opinion very decidedly against its being applied to Christ at all, though on account, as he says, of *some* of the Fathers having so applied it, the adoption of this meaning is not blameworthy, if only it be limited to the human nature;¹⁰ and Basil is evidently inclined to the same opinion.¹¹

And the interpretation given by Hilary does not precisely agree with any of these; for he explains the words as referring to the period when our Lord first assumed (as he supposes) a human form, to carry on intercourse with men, and appeared to Adam in Paradise, and afterwards to Abraham, &c.¹²

(2.) John x. 30. I and my Father are one.

This is a text in which, had there been any traditive interpretation of Scripture handed down by the consent of the Fathers, we might peculiarly have expected such a guide. But we find nothing of the kind. For by some of the Fathers the unity here spoken of is explained as being a moral unity, with reference to an agreement in will, and purpose, and views, while by others it

¹ Dial. cum Tryph. pp. 158 and 222. ed. Ben.

² Leg. pro Christianis, § 10. p. 287. ed. Ben.

³ Cohort. ad gent. Op. tom. i. pp. 67, 8. ed. Potter.

⁴ See passages quoted above, p. 209.

⁵ Adv. hæc. iv. 20. ed. Mass. iv. 37. ed. Grab.

⁶ De decr. Nic. Syn. § 14. tom. i. p. 220. ed. Ben. &c. &c.

⁷ De fide et symb. § 6. tom. vi. col. 154. De Trin. lib. i. § 24. tom. viii. col. 765.

⁸ Ἀναγινωσκὺς τὴν ἀσθενήσαντα αὐτοῦ ψαλμ. Adv. Eunom. lib. iv. tom. i. p. 293. ed. Ben.

⁹ See the passage below, near the end of this section.

¹⁰ Ib.

¹¹ Ib.

¹² Creatus est in viâ Dei a seculo, cum ad conspicibilem speciem subditus creaturæ habitum creationis assumpsit. De Trin. lib. xii. § 45. Op. col. 1136. ed. Ben.

is explained as being a physical unity, with relation to the divine nature and essence.

Thus Novatian says,—“The oneness he speaks of has relation to their concord, and their having the same view, and their being united together in love, so that the Father and Son are properly one by agreement, and by love, and by affection.” And he proceeds to illustrate it by the words of St. Paul relating to himself and Apollos, “he that planteth and he that watereth *are one*.” (1 Cor. iii. 8.)¹

Upon which Pamelius remarks,—“In this he does not write with sufficient caution, in that he does not assert any communion of essence between the Father and the Son, imitating even in this Tertullian; and, more than this, he brings also an example from the Apostle, 1 Cor. iii. which is as it were contrary to the unity of the essence, in which I am not afraid to say that he was certainly deceived.”²

A similar explanation of this text is given by Origen, who plainly says that the unity of will in the Father and Son “was the cause of the Son’s saying, ‘I and the Father are one.’”³

To these might perhaps be added Tertullian⁴ and Athenagoras,⁵ as supposing the same view.

And the same explanation is given by Eusebius, whose orthodoxy some have stoutly contended for; though the Benedictines⁶ more wisely have given him up. He says, “For as he said that he and the Father were one, saying, ‘I and the Father are one,’ so he prays that we all, in imitation of him, may partake of the same unity; not that, as Marcellus thinks, the Word is united to God, and connected with him in essence.”⁷

Among the Ante-Nicene Fathers, I am not aware that there is any passage in which this text is interpreted as showing the unity of essence between the Father and the Son. But, in the disputes with the Arians, this text was constantly referred to in that signification; as, for instance, by Athanasius, Hilary,

¹ Unum quod ait, ad concordiam et eandem sententiam et ad ipsam charitatis societatem pertinet, ut merito unum sit Pater et Filius per concordiam et per amorem et per dilectionem . . . Denique novit hanc concordie unitatem et Apostolus Paulus cum personarum tamen distinctione, &c. [1 Cor. iii. 8.] NOVATIANI De Trin. c. 22.

² Pamelius in loc.

³ Λειτουργίη τοῦ λόγου τοῦ υἱοῦ, ὅτι, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ὅσῳ. In Johann. tom. xiii. § 36; tom. iv. p. 245. See also De Princip. lib. i. § 8. tom. i. p. 56. and Contra Cels. lib. viii. § 12. tom. i. p. 750. and in Ezek. hom. 9. tom. iii. p. 388. ed. Ben.

⁴ Adv. Prax. c. 22.

⁵ Leg. pro. Christianis, § 10. p. 287.

⁶ See Divinitas Christi, &c. pp. 579, &c.

⁷ Ποιῶν γὰρ αὐτός, ἑαυτοὶ τε καὶ τοὶ πατέρες ἐν ἑνείᾳ ἀγάφῃ, φάσκον, Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν ὅσῳ καὶ πάντα ἡμᾶς κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ μέμνησιν τῆς ὁσιότητος τῆς αὐτοῦ μετασχόντες ὡχ-
σταί. οὐ κατὰ Μαρκελλόν, τοῦ λόγου ὀνόματι τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τῆς οὐσίας συταθῆναι. EUSEBII De Eccl. Theolog. lib. iii. c. 19. p. 193. ed. Col. 1688.

Basil, Ambrose, Cyril of Jerusalem, Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine, and others,¹ whose words I need not quote, because their view of the passage is well-known and admitted.

(3) John xiv. 28. My Father is greater than I.

On this important text, we in vain look for consent in the interpretations of the Fathers. Irenæus says, that when Christ said that the Father, who communicates with the Son in all things, alone knew the day and hour of the judgment, he said so "that we might learn through him, that the Father was above all things. For, saith he, 'The Father is greater than I;'"² where it is evident that Irenæus considered the words as applying to the divine nature of Christ; though I suppose, from his orthodoxy elsewhere, only with reference to the order of the Persons in the Trinity, and not to their nature or essence.

But, as it respects Novatian and Origen, they not merely apply the words to the divine nature of Christ, but seem to acknowledge a real inferiority of nature.

Thus Novatian says,—“For who will not acknowledge that the person of the Son is second after the Father, when he finds it said . . . ‘He who sent me is greater than I.’” To which he adds, shortly after,—“The Son affirms that he was sanctified by his Father. Since, therefore, he receives sanctification from the Father, he is inferior to the Father. But he is consequently inferior to the Father, but nevertheless Son. For if he had been the Father, he would have given sanctification, and not received it; but now, by affirming that he received sanctification from the Father, by this very thing by which he proves that he is inferior to the Father, by receiving sanctification from him, he proves that he is the Son, and not the Father.”³

And Origen says,—“Be it so that there are some among the multitude of those who believe and receive a different doctrine, who rashly maintain that the Saviour is the supreme God over all; yet, nevertheless, we do no such thing; believing him who

¹ See Maldonatus or Lampe in loc.

² Si quis exquirat causam, propter quam in omnibus Pater communicans Filio solus scire horam et diem a Domino manifestatus est, neque aptabilem magis neque decentiorem nec sine periculo alteram quam hanc inveniat in præsentī (quoniam enim solus verax magister est Dominus) ut discamus per ipsum super omnia esse Patrem. Etenim Pater, ait, major me est. Ixxx. Adv. hæres. lib. 2. c. 28. ed. Mass. c. 49. ed. Grab.

³ Quis enim non secundum Filii post Patrem agnoscat esse personam, cum legat dictum, &c. . . . aut dum invenit positum, ‘Quoniam qui me misit major me est.’ (De Trin. c. 21.) Filius . . . sanctificatum se a suo Patre esse proponit. Dum ergo accipit sanctificationem a Patre minor Patre est; minor autem Patre consequenter est, sed Filius. Pater enim si fuisset sanctificationem dedisset non accepisset. Et nunc autem profitendo se accepisse sanctificationem a Patre, hoc ipso quo Patre se minorem, accipiendo ab ipso sanctificationem, probat, filium se esse non Patrem monstravit. Ib. c. 23. ed. Col. 1617.

said, 'The Father that sent me is greater than I.' We who say that the material world is his who created all things, clearly maintain that the Son is not stronger than the Father, but inferior to him; and we say this, believing him when he said, 'The Father that sent me is greater than I.'¹

And the same view of this passage is maintained by him elsewhere.²

Nor do I see how Tertullian can be explained otherwise than as affirming the same doctrine from this passage, when he says,—“The Father is the whole substance, but the Son a derivation and portion of the whole, as he himself professes; ‘For the Father is greater than I.’”³

But by others of the Fathers, especially those engaged in disputes with the Arians, these words are explained as referring to the human nature of our Lord.

Thus Athanasius says,—“Whatsoever, therefore, the Scripture says as to the Son receiving, and the Son being glorified, it says this with respect to his humanity, *not with respect to his divinity*. And when he says, ‘My Father who sent me is greater than I,’ he says that the Father was greater than he, from his having become man. But as the Word of the Father, he is equal to him.”⁴

And Cyril of Alexandria says,—“The word of God is above humanity as one who is by nature God and the Son; but not disdaining to appear to be in subjection, on account of his having taken human nature. Therefore, at one time he said, ‘He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,’ ‘I and the Father are one;’ at another time, on the other hand, ‘My Father is greater than I.’ For being not inferior to the Father as regarded identity of essence or anything else whatever, in which he could be compared to the Father, he says, that he is among things inferior *on account of his human nature*.”⁵

¹ Ἐστὶν δὲ τῆς αἰς ἐν πληθὺ πιστευούσης, καὶ δέχομένης διὰ τὴν προφητείαν ὑποτίθεσθαι τοῖς Σωτῆρα εἶναι τοῖς μέγιστον ἐπὶ παντὶ Θεόν ἀλλ’ οὐτὶ γὰρ ἡμῖς τοιοῦτοι, οἱ πυνόμενοι αὐτῷ λεγόντι, Ὁ Πατὴρ, ὁ πνίψας με, μίζων μου ὄντι. . . . Σαφὲς γὰρ ἡμῖς, οἱ λεγοντὲς τοῦ παντὸς κτιστὸς καὶ τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς κόσμον εἶναι, ὅμως τοῦ υἱοῦ οὐκ ἰσχυροῦντο τοῦ Πατρὸς, ἀλλ’ ὑποδυσσώτεροι, καὶ τοῦτο λεγόμεν αὐτῷ πυνόμενοι αὐτοῖς, κ. τ. λ. Conl. Cels. lib. viii. §§ 14. 15. tom. i. pp. 752, 3.

² See his Comment in Matth. tom. 15. § 10. Op. tom. 3. p. 665., and Comment in Johann. tom. 13. § 25. Op. tom. 4. p. 235., and Ib. tom. 32. § 18. p. 461.

³ Pater tota substantia est. Filius vero derivatio totius et portio sicut ipse proficitur, Quia Pater major me est. Adv. Prax. c. 9.

⁴ Ὅσα οὐκ λέγει ἡ γραφή, ὅτι ἐλάβεν ὁ υἱός, καὶ εὐχάρστη ὁ υἱός, διὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα αὐτοῦ λέγει οὐ διὰ τὴν θεότητα. Καὶ ὅτε λέγει, ὁ Πατὴρ μου ὁ πνίψας με μίζων μου ὄντι, ἐστὶ ἀνθρώπος γάρ τινος μίζων αὐτοῦ λέγει τοῦ Πατρὸς. Λύγος δὲ ἐστὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς ὅσος αὐτοῦ ὄντι. De Incarn. § 4. tom. i. pt. 2. p. 873.

⁵ Ὁ αὖ Θεοῦ Λόγος . . . ἀσώματος μὴ ἀνθρωποειδούς, αἰς φύσιν Θεός καὶ υἱός. οὐκ ἀντιμαζών δὲ, καὶ τὸ ἐν ἑαυτῷ γινώσκει δοκῶν, διὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον. Τελευτῶν ποτὶ μὴ φράσκει, ὁ ὁρακὸς καὶ ἰσχυρὸς τοῦ Πατρὸς. ἔργον καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν ἔργῳ. Ποτὶ δὲ αὐ πάλιν, ὁ Πατὴρ μὲν μίζων

And so Augustine,⁴ Ambrose,⁵ and others have explained it.

Many, however, maintain the opinion that it refers to the divine nature of Christ, and is intended to show the priority of order in the Father as the Original from whom the Son was generated; and, strange to say, this view is advocated by both the Fathers from whom we have just quoted, Athanasius and Cyril, in other parts of their works. Thus Athanasius says,—“For on this account it was that the Son himself did not say, ‘My Father is *superior* to me,’ lest any one should suppose that he was of a different nature to him, but he said, ‘*greater*,’ not indeed in magnitude nor time, but on account of his generation from the Father; nevertheless, even in saying he is greater, he showed the quality of the essence.”⁶

And Cyril,—“The Son, therefore, being equal with the Father as it respects his essence, and like to him in all points, says, that the Father is greater, as being without beginning, he himself having a beginning only as it respects his generation, although he has a similar subsistence with him.”⁴ In the context,⁵ however, he gives the other explanation, viz. that these words are to be understood only with reference to the human nature of Christ.

All these amply show how utterly destitute the Fathers were of any traditive interpretation of the text.

Among the others who have considered this passage as applying to the divine nature of the Son may be mentioned Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and Epiphanius.⁶

Even in such texts as—

(4.) Phil. ii. 6. Who being in the form of God *thought it not robbery* [as our translation runs] to be equal with God—we find patristical authority for an unorthodox interpretation.

These words have been used as evidence in the controversies

μεν ὡντιν. Οὐ μὲν γὰρ ἐν τοῦ Πατρὸς, κατὰ γὰρ τὸ ὡς οὐσία ταύτην, καὶ κατὰ τὰς ὁτίων τὴν προτάσει, ἢ ἐκείνῃ καὶ ἐστὶν διὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον. CYRIL. ALEX. De recta fide ad Theodos. c. 28. Op. tom. v. Pt. 2. p. 25. ed. Aubertin.

¹ De Trin. lib. ii. cc. 6 and 7.

² De fide. lib. ii. c. 4.

³ Διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς οὐκ ἠρῶν, ὁ Πατὴρ μου κρείττων μου ὡντιν, ἵνα μὴ ζῶντι τῆς τῆς οὐσίας φύσεως αὐτοῦ ὑπολάβω, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἵστην, οὐ μὲν γὰρ τῇ, οὐδὲ χροῖα, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Πατρὸς γνησίῳ πληρὸν ὅτι καὶ ὡς τὸ ἄπειρον, μᾶλλον ἵστην, οὐδὲ πάλιν τῇ τῆς οὐσίας ὁμότητι. ATHANAS. Orat. 1. Contr. Arian. § 58. tom. i. pp. 462, 3. And see his treatise De Synod. § 28. tom. i. Pt. 2. p. 745.

⁴ Ὅτις τοιγάρων κατὰ τὴν τῆς οὐσίας λόγον ὑπαρχόν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Πατρὸς, καὶ ὁμοίως κατὰ πάντα, μᾶλλον αὐτὸν φασὶν ὡς ἀρχὴν, ἔχει ἀρχὴν κατὰ μόνον τὸ ἐξ οὗ, καὶ συνδρομὸν αὐτοῦ τῇ ὑπαρχῇ ἔχει. THESAURUS, c. 11. Op. tom. v. Pt. 1. pp. 85, 6.

⁵ See pp. 85, 86 and 91.

⁶ See these and several others in Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. 1, who takes this view of the text. Forbes supports, and likewise from the Fathers, the opinion that it refers to the human nature, and denies that it can have any reference to the divine. (Instruct. Hist. Theolog. lib. i. c. 25.) Many modern commentators, as Lampe, consider it as spoken in reference to the complex person of the Mediator, in which the divine and human natures were united.

respecting the divinity of our Lord in precisely opposite significations. Upon referring to the Fathers respecting them, what do we find? Exactly the same discrepancy.

Among the Ante-Nicene Fathers (with the exception of Novatian, whom I shall quote presently) I have not found any explanation of the passage such as can certify us of the way in which the words were understood, as the passages in which they are quoted give them merely in the form of a literal translation.¹

For the orthodox sense we may refer to Chrysostom,² Theodoret,³ Augustine,⁴ and many others.

While on the other hand, as we have already seen, the unorthodox interpretation is evidently given to this passage by Novatian, who interprets it as meaning, "he did not think it fell to his lot to be equal with God. For, although he remembered that he was God of God the Father, he never either compared or likened himself to God the Father," &c.⁵

This was the interpretation given to this passage by Arius, who, as Chrysostom tells us, explained it thus, "being in the form of God he did not take it to himself to be equal with God."⁶

Other instances, in points of less importance, the reader will find in the comments of the Father upon Gen. vi. 2, 4. Mark xiii. 32. 1 Peter iii. 19. iv. 6. In the first of these he will find the authors of the first three centuries unanimously interpreting it of the angels, while others in the fourth and fifth have no hesitation in denouncing such an interpretation as ignorant and absurd.

These instances are adduced merely as a specimen, but any inquirer into this matter will find that they afford a fair sample of the general state of the case, and that the notion of there being any traditive interpretation of Scripture common to the catholic Fathers is perfectly unfounded and contrary to the plain facts of the case. In all passages where there is any difficulty, the Fathers are sure to be opposed to each other in their interpreta-

¹ Thus Tertull. Adv. Prax. c. 7. Adv. Marc. lib. v. c. 20. and De resurr. carn. c. 6.

² In loc.

³ In loc.

⁴ Contr. Maximin. lib. 1. c. 5.

⁵ De Trin. c. 17. See p. 214 above. It is remarkable that Dr. Burton, when giving, in his Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the divinity of Christ, their remarks on this text, has not alluded to this passage, though he has quoted the context of it. (pp. 122, 125, 133, 136. 2d. ed.) I have not referred to the passage he has quoted (p. 124) from the letter written by the churches of Vienna and Lyons, preserved by Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. v. 2.), because it appears to me very open to opposite interpretations.

⁶ Επει (i. e. Arius) ότι η μορφη Θεου υπαρχον ουχ ιπρασε το να ισα ισα Θεο. Chrysa. in loc. In Phil. hom. 6. § 2. tom. xi. p. 235. On the various meanings that have been given to this passage see Wolf in loc.

tions, and I may add they are often similarly opposed where there appears no difficulty. We need only consult those commentators, who have given more fully the interpretations of the Fathers to see the truth of this.¹

Surely, then, we may say, as Bishop Patrick (our opponents' witness) says of his Romish antagonist, "*He knew, if he understood anything, there is no traditive interpretation of Scripture.*"² And Bishop Taylor, "It is said there are traditive interpretations as well as traditive propositions, but these have not much distinct consideration in them, both because their uncertainty is as great as the other upon the former considerations, as also because in very deed there are *no such things* as traditive interpretations universal; for as for particulars they signify no more but that they are not sufficient determinations of questions theological; therefore because they are particular, contingent, and of infinite variety, and they are no more argument than the particular authority of those men whose commentaries they are, and therefore must be considered with them."³

And so *Placette*, as translated and published by our Archbishop Tenison, says,—“How little help there is for Scripture in tradition appeareth hence, that it can no otherwise teach what is the true sense of Scripture, but by the unanimous consent of the Fathers, which whether it be to be had in *any one text of Scripture* may be much doubted. It was a hard condition, therefore, which Pope Pius IV. prescribed in his profession of faith to all who desired admission into the Church of Rome, and which may *forever silence all the Romish commentators*, ‘That they will never receive nor interpret Scripture any otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.’ Now I would fain know *how this Law can be observed*, since I may *confidently affirm that there is no one place of Scripture explained the same way by all the Fathers*. For there are many places which none of them have touched, and none which all have interpreted. Nor will it suffice to say, that they agree who have interpreted it, and that the silence of the rest is to be taken for consent; as if they must be supposed to consent who were ignorant of such interpretations, or died perhaps before they were made, or as if the antients were wont expressly to reject all interpretations different from their own, or those might not be rejected, or at least others proposed, in those books of the Fathers which are lost. It is not enough, therefore, to have the consent

¹ See particularly Cornelius a Lapide, and Maldonatus; and Dr. Whitby's *Dissertatio De SS. interpret. sec. Patrum* comment. Lond. 1714. 8vo. where many similar instances are adduced.

² Answ. to Touchstone, p. 15.

³ Liberty of proph. § 5.

of a few unless we be assured of the concurrence of the rest. But granting that it is, it cannot be denied, that our adversaries can collect nothing certain out of any place of Scripture, if any one of the antients have interpreted it otherwise. Hence Alphonsus a Castro requireth, that among the necessary qualifications of a text of Scripture to be produced for the conviction of heretics, this be the chief, 'that it be so plain and undoubted, that none of the sacred and approved doctors interpret it in some other sense, according to which such a proposition cannot be thereby convinced of heresy.' But if this be true, how few places will there be of whose sense we may not doubt? Certainly there are very few explained the same way by all antient commentators The anonymous writer of the 'Treatise of the liberties of the Gallican church' maintains that there are few places of Scripture which the holy Fathers have not differently interpreted. As will also manifestly appear to any one who shall consult those interpreters that are wont to produce the expositions of the antient writers. Hence the reader may imagine to what a strait *our adversaries would be reduced, if they were tied up to their own laws*, and allowed to urge no other places of Scripture against us than what are unanimously interpreted by the Fathers *That the sense of Scripture cannot be learned from tradition hence appeareth.*"¹

And so lastly Dean Sherlock;—"As for expounding Scripture by the unanimous consent of primitive Fathers, this is indeed the rule which the Council of Trent gives, and which their doctors swear to observe. How well they keep this oath, they ought to consider. Now as to this, you may tell them that you would readily pay a great deference to the unanimous consent of Fathers, could you tell how to know it; and therefore in the first place you desire to know the agreement of how many Fathers makes an unanimous consent; for you have been told, that there has been *as great variety in interpreting Scripture among the antient Fathers as among our modern interpreters*; that there are very few, *if any*, controverted texts of Scripture which are interpreted by an unanimous consent of all the Fathers. If this unanimous consent then signify all the Fathers, we shall be troubled to find such a consent in expounding Scripture. Must it, then, be the unanimous consent of the greatest number of Fathers? This will be a very hard thing, especially for unlearned men to tell noses: we can know the opinion only of those Fathers who were the writers in every age, and whose writings have been preserved down to us; and who can tell, whether the major number of those Fathers who did not write, or whose

¹ Incurable scepticism of the Church of Rome, c. 2.

writings are lost, were of the same mind with those whose writings we have? And why must the major part be always the wisest and best men? And if they were not, the consent of a few wise men is to be preferred before great numbers of other expositors. Again ask them, whether these Fathers were infallible or traditionary expositors of Scripture, or whether they expounded Scripture according to their own private reason and judgment. If they were infallible expositors and *delivered the traditionary sense and interpretation of Scripture, it is a little strange how they should differ in their expositions of Scripture. . . .* If they expounded Scripture *according to their own reason and judgment, AS IT IS PLAIN THEY DID*, then their authority is no more sacred than their reason is; and those are the best expositors, whether antient or modern, whose expositions are backed with the best reasons. We think it a great *confirmation* of our faith that the Fathers of the church in the first and best ages did believe the same doctrines, and expound Scripture in great and concerning points, much to the same sense that we do, and therefore we refuse not to appeal to them, but yet we do not wholly build our faith upon the authority of the Fathers, *we forsake them, where they forsake the Scriptures, or put perverse senses on them. . . .* There is no other way, then, left of understanding Scripture, but to expound it as we do other writings; by considering the signification and propriety of words and phrases, the scope and context of the place, the reasons of things, the analogy between the Old and New Testament, and the like. *When they dispute with Protestants they can reasonably pretend to no other way of expounding Scripture, because WE ADMIT OF NO OTHER.*"¹ And so elsewhere on the general question of doctrinal consent among the Fathers, when his opponents had urged "how great and manifest" primitive consent was "to those good men who inquire," he sarcastically replies, "*Yea, how great indeed, for nobody can find it but the Vicar of Putney.*"²

Nay, what is the testimony of Origen, in the middle of the third century? "Celsus remarks," he says, "that they [i. e. the earliest Christians] were all of one mind; not observing in this, that *from the very beginning there were differences among believers respecting the meaning of the books that were believed to be divine;*"³ and further on, accounting for the

¹ Preservative against Popery, Pt. 1. pp. 52—4; or in Bp. Gibbon's Collection, vol. 2.

² Vindication of Discourse of Notes of church, in Bishop Gibbon's Preservative against Popery, vol. i. Tit. 3. c. 2. p. 55. The allusion is to Sclater's "Consensus Veterum."

³ Φησὶ δὲ καὶ ὅτι ἐν ἀρχαῖσι πατέρι' οὐδ' ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις, ὅτι ἀρχαῖον ἦν τὸ ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις.

variety of sects among Christians, of which Celsus had complained, he says that this arose "from many of the learned among the heathen being desirous of understanding the Christian faith, from which it followed that from their understanding differently the words which were believed by all to be divine, there arose heresies, taking their names from those who were struck with the first principles of the word, but were somehow moved by some probable reasons to entertain different views of it one from another."¹

Now this is clearly inconsistent with the notion of there being any traditive interpretation of Scripture commonly received in the church, and thought to be from the Apostles; for here it is evident that the Scriptures were taken as the rule by which to judge what the Christian faith was, (which Origen mentions not only without reprehension, but as coming in the natural course of things,) and that from the different interpretations given to the Scriptures (as was likely) by these learned heathen, there arose various sects, and that he knew no such cure for this as a traditive interpretation of Scripture coming from the Apostles. The utmost he pleads for as coming from the Apostles by successional delivery, and which he evidently considers to be in Scripture as well and as clearly, is the summary of the elementary articles of the faith above quoted. For had he held the views of our opponents, he would have thrown the blame of those divisions upon their authors not having followed this traditive interpretation derived from the Apostles, whereas it is evident that he had no notion of the existence of this infallible guide, but seeing that men would come with all manner of pre-conceived views and prejudices to the revelation God had made of the truth in the written word, he held it to follow as a matter of course, that many different views would be taken of it, and that such variety of sentiment ought not to be laid to the charge of Christianity.

If, then, there was no such interpretation having a claim upon men to be received as their guide in the earliest times of the church, how much less can there be anything having such pretensions at the present day.

When, therefore, our opponents send us to the Fathers to learn from their consentient interpretation of Scripture what is its true meaning, they are sending us to that which has no existence, and

μενους θεους και βιβλικην απολην γεγεννηται διαφοραι των πιστωτων. Contr. Cels. lib. iii. § 11. tom. i. p. 453.

¹ Διὰ τὸ σπουδάζειν συνηταὶ τὰ χριστιανισμοῦ καὶ τὸν φιλολογησάμενος. Τούτω δ' ἐκλαβήσας, διαφορὰς ἀνέβλεψεν τοῖς ἀπὸ παντὶ πιστευόμεναις καὶ θεοῖς λόγοις, τὸ γινώσκειν αἰρέσεις ἐκπιπύμεναι τῶν θαυμάσαντων μὴ τῇ τοῦ λόγου ἀρχῇ, καταβῆναι δ' ὅπως παντ' αὐτῷ ἵππο τιμὴν πύσαντο πρὸς τὰς αἰ ἀλλήλους διαφορὰς. Origen. Contr. Cels. lib. iii. § 12. tom. i. p. 454, b.

to a search in which, if it be not most laborious and extended, we are very liable to be misled in inferring consent from the testimony of a few, (as our opponents have been, as I shall show presently), and in which, after all, it is next to impossible to arrive at any certainty; and yet this "consent" is proposed to us as part of the rule of faith, without which we cannot be sure what is the meaning of Scripture, even on the most fundamental points.

What then, I would ask, must be the consequence, where their system is received, and men go to the Fathers truly and impartially to ascertain what they have delivered, and find that there is hardly a single doctrine or text about which there is consent, even in the few that remain to us? Clearly this, that men will feel that there is no certainty to be had with respect to any one doctrine of Christianity; and thus he who begins with the Scriptures, as interpreted by the consent of all the Fathers, may end in neglecting both. Their system may look very well in theory, and may please very well those who are satisfied to pin their faith upon the representations of others, and accept a few quotations from four or five Fathers as proving the consent of the whole primitive church, but the moment you bring it fairly and fully to the test, its unsoundness is betrayed. It falls to pieces at once.

And I will venture to add, that of those who have shown the most intimate acquaintance with the writings of the Fathers, there have been but few who have not practically confessed this to be the case.

But it may be urged, that there are some cases in which the Fathers expressly claim to be considered as delivering the doctrine preached by the Apostles, and consequently that in such a case we are bound to believe their statements.

It is, therefore, important to show further, that doctrines, statements, and practices, were not unfrequently maintained by primitive Fathers as having come from the Apostles, and were called apostolical traditions, which were opposed by other Fathers, and which consequently, upon our opponents' own principles, cannot demand our belief as having proceeded from the Apostles; from which we may safely conclude, as in the former case, that the testimony of a few of the primitive Fathers to such tradition, even though it be not opposed by the writings that *happen* to remain to us, is an utterly insufficient *proof* of its apostolicity.

As instances of this nature I would notice,—

(1.) The doctrine of the Millennium.

It is confidently delivered to us by the principal Fathers of the first two centuries and a half, uncontradicted by the others

we possess of that period, that the Apostles affirmed that at Christ's second coming there should be a resurrection of the just to a life of joy and happiness upon earth, where they should live with Christ for a thousand years, previous to the general resurrection and the final judgment.

This, I admit, they attempted to prove, partly from Scripture; but they also claimed an Apostolical tradition in its favour. Thus Irenæus says,—“The above-mentioned blessing belongs undeniably to the times of the kingdom, when the just shall rise from the dead and reign, when the creation, renovated and freed [from the curse], shall bring forth abundantly of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven and the fertility of the earth; *as the Presbyters, who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, have related that they heard from him in accordance with what the Lord taught concerning those times*, and said, ‘The days shall come in which vines shall spring up, having each ten thousand branches,’ &c. . . . *These things also Papias, a hearer of John*, and who became the companion of Polycarp, a man of antient times, witnesses in writing in the fourth of his books; for there were five books written by him.”¹ And again;—“*Then, as the Presbyters say*, shall those who are worthy of dwelling in heaven depart thither; and others shall enjoy the delights of paradise; and others shall possess the beauty of the city; for everywhere shall the Saviour be beheld according as those who see him shall be worthy.” . . . “That this is the arrangement and classification of those who are saved, *the Presbyters, the disciples of the Apostles, tell us*, and that they advance through such stages; and ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father; the Son finally giving up to the Father his own creation, as also it is said by the Apostle.” [referring to 1 Cor. xv. 25, 6.]²

¹ Prædicta itaque benedictio ad tempora Regni sine contradictione pertinet, quando regnabunt justi surgentes a mortuis: quando et creatura renovata et liberata multitudinem fructificabit universæ escæ, ex rore cœli et ex fertilitate terræ: quemadmodum Presbyteri meminere, qui Johannem discipulum Domini viderunt, audisse se ab eo, quemadmodum de temporibus illis docebat Dominus, et dicebat: ‘Venient dies in quibus vineæ nascentur, singulæ decem millia palmittum habentes,’ &c. . . . Ταῦτα δὲ καὶ Πάπιας Ἰωάννου μὴ ἀκούσας, Πολυκάρπῳ δὲ ἱταρὸς γέγονας, ἀρχιεὶς αὐτοῦ, ἐγγράφως ἐπισμαρτυρεῖ ἐν τῇ τέταρτῃ τοῦ αὐτοῦ βιβλίῳ. ὥτι γὰρ αὐτὸς πρὸς βιβλίῳ συντάττειν. IREN. Adv. hæc. lib. v. c. 33. (ed. Mam. p. 833.)

² Ὡς οἱ πρεσβύτεροι λέγουσι τότε καὶ οἱ μὴ καταβύθοντες τῆς ἐν οὐρανῷ διατρύχης, αὐτοὶ χαίρουσιν, οἱ δὲ τῆς τοῦ παραδείσου τρυφῆς ἀπολαύουσιν, οἱ δὲ τῇ λαμπρότητι τῆς πόλεως καθιζήσουσι πανταχοῦ γὰρ ὁ Σωτὴρ ὁραβήσεται, καθὼς ἀξίως ὡροῦνται οἱ ὁράοντες αὐτόν. . . . Hanc esse adordinationem et dispositionem eorum qui salvantur dicunt Presbyteri Apostolorum discipuli, et per hujusmodi gradus proficere, et per Spiritum quidem [ad] Filium, per Filium autem ascendere ad Patrem, Filio deinceps cedente Patri opus suum, quemadmodum et ab Apostolo dictum est. [1 Cor. xv. 25, 6.]” Ib. c. 36. (p. 337.)

From these passages it appears, that this doctrine was delivered as an Apostolical tradition, not upon the authority of Papias only, as is sometimes stated, but of others, who were also the immediate disciples of the Apostles. And as it respects Papias, there seems no reason why we should question his capability to transmit what he had heard more than that of any other of the Fathers. Let us hear what he says as to the means of information he had, and the use he made of them;—"I will not be backward," he says, "to set down in order for you, with the interpretations, those things which I formerly fully learnt from the presbyters, and well remembered," confirming the truth delivered by them. For I am not accustomed, as most, to delight in those that talk much, but in those that teach the truth; nor in those that relate strange precepts, but in those that relate the precepts really given by the Lord, and that proceed from truth itself. And if anywhere I met with any one who had conversed with the elders, I inquired diligently after the sayings of the elders, what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip, or what Thomas, or James, or what John or Matthew, or any other of the disciples of the Lord, and what things Aristion and John the elder (or, presbyter), the disciples of our Lord, say. For I thought that the accounts given in books could not profit me so much as what I might hear from the mouth of those yet living and remaining in the world."¹

And although Eusebius says, that, judging from his books, he was a man of very narrow understanding, yet this censure has not much weight when it comes from one strongly opposed to him in the doctrines he there stated, especially when it is admitted, as Eusebius is obliged to admit, that he induced very many, of whom Irenæus is mentioned as one, to embrace the Millennarian doctrine, for Irenæus certainly was a better judge of his qualifications than Eusebius. And when Eusebius mentions as the cause of his error, his having understood those statements literally which were to be understood figuratively, (upon which, by the way, he seems partly to infer the narrowness of his understanding,) he is in fact assuming the very point in question, and charging that as a fault upon Papias, which Irenæus, Justin, and others, whom no man pretends to accuse of a want of understanding, stoutly defend.²

¹ Ὅσα ποτε παρὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καλῶς ἔμαθον καὶ καλῶς ἐμνημόνευσα.

² PAPIÆ fragm. in Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. ult. and in Routh, Reliq. S. vol. i. p. 8.

³ The words of Eusebius are these. Καὶ ἀλλὰ δι' ὃς αὐτὸς συγγραφεὺς ὡς ἐκ παραδόσεως ἀγαθῶν ὡς αὐτοὶ πάντα παρατίθενται, ἔβλεπε τι τιπας παραβολὰς τοῦ Σωτῆρος καὶ διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ τίνα ἀλλὰ μυθιστοῖρα. Ἐν οἷς καὶ χίλιαι τὰ φασὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἴστανται μετὰ τῶν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστάντων σωματικῶς τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ βασιλείας ἐπὶ ταῦτοισι τῆς γὰρ ὑποστάσεως. Ἄ δι' ἡγούμεναι τὰς ἀποστολικὰς παραδείξεις διηγήσεως ὑπολάβω, τὰ ὅτι ὑποδείγμασι πρὸς αὐτὸν μυθτικῶς εἰρήματα μὴ συσταμένα. Σφραγὶς γὰρ τοῖς σμικροῖς ἐν τῇ γού, ὡς ἐκ ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ λεγόντων τεκμηριωμένων ἑκείνῳ φαίνεται. Πλὴν καὶ τοῖς μετ' αὐτοῦ πλῆστοις

Moreover, as this doctrine was maintained as one derived by successional delivery from the Apostles, so was it more especially defended as one supported by numerous testimonies of Scripture.

Thus Justin Martyr affirms that Ezekiel and Isaiah and the rest of the prophets maintain it; and having quoted some passages, (viz. Isa. lxxv. 17—25. and Ps. lxxxix. 4,) he adds, “And one of us, by name John, one of the Apostles of Christ, in the revelation made to him, predicted that those that believe in our Christ, should live a thousand years in Jerusalem, and that after this should be the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection of all together with one accord, and the judgment, which also our Lord said, that they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be like the angels, being the children of the God of the resurrection. [Luke xx. 35, 6.]”¹

Similar evidence for the doctrine is still more largely adduced by Irenæus, who quotes from more than a dozen books of Scripture in proof of it.² So Tertullian speaks of it as predicted both by Ezekiel and St. John.³

Further; they maintain this doctrine with the greatest confidence as the truth of God, and intimate that those who did not receive it among the faithful were such as had been led astray in the matter by the heretics. Thus Irenæus says,—“The aforesaid blessing, [viz. that of Jacob by Isaac,] undeniably belongs to the times of the kingdom.”⁴ And again; “Such promises do most clearly signify the feasting of the creature which God promises to give in the kingdom of the just.”⁵ And again; “These and all other such things are undeniably spoken respecting the resurrection of the just.”⁶ And when introducing this subject, he attributes the necessity of discussing it to the circumstance of some having imbibed “heretical notions” on the point. “Since,” he says, “some of those who are thought to be correct in their belief transgress the order of the promotion of the just, and are ignorant of the steps by which they are gradually trained for the incorruptible state, having in themselves *heretical notions*;⁷ for

ὅσοι τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν τῆς ὁμοίας αὐτῶ δοξῆς παραπίπτει, γὰρ οὐκ, τὴν ἀρχαίωτα τάδεως προβαλλόμενος. ὡς περ οὐκ Εἰρηναῖος καὶ ἡ τις ἄλλος τὰ ὁμοία φράσιν ἀναγινώσκων. EUSEB. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. ult.

¹ JUSTIN. M. Dial. cum Tryph. § 81. ed. Ben. pp. 178, 9. (ed. 1686. p. 307.)

² See IREN. Adv. HÆR. lib. v. cc. 33—36.

³ TERTULL. Adv. Marc. lib. iii. c. 24.

⁴ See p. 248 above.

⁵ Tales itaque promissiones manifestissime in Regno justorum istius creature epulationem significant quam Deus repromittit ministraturum se. IREN. lib. v. c. 34. (p. 334, ed. Mass.)

⁶ Hæc enim [et] alia universa in resurrectionem justorum sine controversia dicta sunt. Ib. c. 35. (p. 335, ed. Mass.)

⁷ Quidam ex his qui putantur recte credidisse.

⁸ Hereticos sensus in se habentes.

the heretics despising the work of God, and not believing in the salvation of their flesh say that as soon as they are dead, they go beyond the heavens and the Creator . . . They, therefore, who reject the resurrection altogether, and as far as is in their power take it away, what wonder is it if they do not know the order of the resurrection? Since, therefore, *the opinions of some are influenced by the discourses of the heretics*,¹ and they are ignorant of the arrangements of God and the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the kingdom which is the commencement of the incorruptible state, by which kingdom they who are worthy are habituated by degrees to enjoy communion with God, it is necessary to speak concerning these things," &c.²

And thus also speaks Justin;—"Tell me," says Trypho, "do you affirm that this place Jerusalem is to be really rebuilt, and do you expect that your people shall be gathered together [there,] and live happily with Christ, together with the patriarchs and prophets, and those of our race, and those that became proselytes before that your Christ came, or have you proceeded to affirm these things that you might seem to overcome us in argument?" To which Justin replies,—“I am not such a wretch, O Trypho, as to speak differently to what I think. I have, therefore, already confessed to you, that I and many others are of this opinion.” But I have also told you that many even of those Christians who are of pure and pious sentiments, do not acknowledge this. For as to those who are called Christians, but are in reality atheists and impious heretics, I have shown you that in all things they teach blasphemous, and infidel, and absurd doctrines. . . . For I am resolved to follow—not men or human doctrines, but—God, and the doctrines that come from him. For if you fall in with some who are called Christians, and who do not confess this, but even dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and who say that there is no resurrection of the dead, but that their souls as soon as they die, are taken up into heaven, you must not suppose them to be Christians. As neither would any one who rightly inquired into the matter, affirm the Sadducees or the similar sects of the Genistæ and Meristæ, and Galileans, and Hellenists, and Baptist-

¹ *Transferuntur quorundam sententiæ ab hæreticis sermonibus.*

² *IREN. ADV. HÆR. lib. v. cc. 31, 32. (pp. 330, 331. ed. Mass.)*

³ The words here omitted are, *ὡς καὶ πάντες ἐπιστάσι τούτο γινώσκουσιν*, which seem clearly corrupt. Thirlby conjectures *ἐπιστάσθαι*, which the Benedictine Editor adopts, but which does not appear to remove the difficulty. The sentence appears to me evidently to require *ἐπιστάμεθα*, (which occurs in the latter part of the paragraph,) and then the sense would be, “as also we fully know that this will be.”

Pharisees, (and bear with me while I speak my mind,) to be Jews, but Jews and children of Abraham in name, and confessing God with their lips, as God himself exclaimed, but having their heart far from him. But I, and all Christians altogether orthodox,¹ know both that there will be a resurrection of the flesh, and a thousand years in Jerusalem built up, and beautified and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and the rest affirm."²

Here, then, although (according to the reading of the copies that remain to us, the correctness of which is doubted by many³) he admits that many Christians of pure and pious sentiments did not hold this doctrine, yet he lays it down as certainly true, and one which all those who were fully orthodox maintained; and he couples the denial of it with very serious heresies.

And to those already mentioned, we may add, as defenders of this doctrine, among others, Nepos,⁴ Victorinus Petavionensis,⁵ Lactantius,⁶ Apollinarius Junior,⁷ and Sulpicius Severus,⁸ to which some add even the Nicene Council.⁹

Moreover, as we have the testimony of Eusebius, quoted above, to the number of those who embrace this doctrine, so we have a similar testimony from Jerome, who says that though he did not adopt the doctrine, yet he could not condemn it, because many members of the church and martyrs had maintained it;¹⁰ and

¹ Εγώ δὲ καὶ ὅτις μετ' ὀρθογνημονίας κατὰ πάντα Χριστιανοί.

² Dial. cum Tryph. § 80. ed. Ben. pp. 177, 8. (ed. 1686. p. 306.)

³ It has been thought by many, that instead of πολλοὺς δ' αὖ καὶ τῶν τῆς καθαρᾶς καὶ ὑπεβούσης οὐρανὸν Χριστιανῶν γένους, we should read πολλοὺς δ' αὖ καὶ τῶν μὴ τῆς καθαρᾶς, κ. σ. λ. which certainly would suit the context better, but is an emendation hardly admissible on conjecture. Archbishop Tillotson, however, in his "Rule of faith," pleads strongly for it; and he supposes the passage here referred to by Justin, to be that occurring in § 35. pp. 132, 3. (ed. 1686. p. 253.) The words of Irenæus, however, quoted p. 250 above, (note 7.) support the reading of the MSS.

⁴ See Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vii. 24. and Hieron. De vir. illustr. c. 69.

⁵ See Hieron. De vir. ill. c. 18. and Fragm. op. De fabr. mundi, in Cave, Hist. Lit. sub. nom.

⁶ See Inst. vii. 24. and Epit. § 11. and Hieron. De vir. ill. c. 18.

⁷ See Hieron. De vir. ill. c. 18. and Comm. in In. in Pref. ad lib. 18. Basil. Ep. 263. ed. Ben. (al. 74.)

⁸ See Hieron. Comm. in Ezech. c. 36.

⁹ Their words, according to Gelasius Cyzicenus, were these;—"Wherefore we expect new heavens and a new earth, according to the Holy Scriptures, when the appearance and kingdom of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, is manifested to us; and then, as Daniel says, the saints of the most high shall take the kingdom, and the earth shall be pure, a holy earth of the living, and not of the dead; which David foreseeing, by the eye of faith, exclaims, I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, the land of the meek and humble. For 'blessed,' saith he, 'are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' And the Prophet, 'The feet of the meek and humble,' saith he, 'shall tread upon it.'" Gelas. Cyzic. Acta Conc. Nic. P. 2. c. 31. § 8. pp. 156, 7. ed. 1599.

¹⁰ Quæ licet non sequamur tamen damnare non possumus, quia multi Ecclesi-

he admits that the majority of the Western Church in his part of the world maintained it; and that so earnestly, as to be indignant with those who denied it.²

It is impossible, then, to deny that the testimony in favour of this doctrine, as an Apostolical tradition, is such as can be adduced for hardly any other; and by the earliest Fathers it is delivered to us as one which it savours strongly of heresy to deny. They deliver it to us as the undeniable sense of Scripture, and as confirmed by a testimony coming to them by successional delivery from the oral teaching of the Apostles.

Nor is it till we come to the middle of the third century, that we find any record of any person of note in the church opposing it.³ About that time we find, by an incidental notice of the work in Eusebius⁴ and Jerome,⁵ that Dionysius of Alexandria wrote a book against it, in refutation of one by Nepos; according to Eusebius, or, as Jerome says, against Irenæus; and was answered by Apollinarius, who (as Jerome tells us in the passage above quoted,⁶) was followed in this point by most of the Western Church in Jerome's part of the world. And after this period we find most of the authors that remain to us opposing; and even ridiculing, the doctrine.⁷

asticorum virorum et martyres ista dixerunt. Et unanimesque in sue sepe abundant, et Domini cuncta iudicio reserventur. HIERON. Comm. in Hierem. c. 19. Tom. iv. col. 975, 6. ed. Vall. Ven.

¹ De repromissionibus futurorum, quomodo debeant accipi, et qua ratione intelligenda sit Apocalypsis Johannis, quam et juxta litteram accipimus, judicandum est, si spiritualiter ut scripta est dissimus, multorum veterum videbimur opinionibus contraire. Latinorum, Tertulliani, Victorini, Lactantii; Græcorum, ut ceteros prætermittam, Irenæi tantum Lugd. Episc. faciam mentionem, adversum quem vir eloquentissimus Dionysius Alexandrinæ Ecclesiæ pontifex elegantem scribit librum, irridens, mille annorum fabulam . . . Oti duobus voluminibus respondet Apollinarius, quem non solum sua sectæ homines vel et nostrorum, in hac parte dumtaxat, plurima sequitur multitudo, ut præcoga mente jam cernamus, quantum in me rabies concitanda sit. Hieron. Comm. in Is. in Pref. ad libr. 18. Tom. iv. col. 767, 1. ed. Vall. Ven.

² Unless we think that the answer of the relations of our Lord to Domitian, when questioned concerning the future kingdom of Christ, is pertinent to this matter; and it certainly appears to me worthy of observation, in connexion with it. "Being asked concerning Christ and his kingdom, what it would be, and when and where it was to appear, they answered that it was not mundane or earthly, but heavenly and angelical; and would be at the end of the world, when he should come in glory and judge the quick and the dead, and give to each according to his works." (Ἐρωτηθεὶς διὰ τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ, ὅταν τε ἔσῃ, καὶ ποῦ καὶ πῶς βασιλεύσει, λέγει δοῦναι, ὅς οὐ κόσμικὴ μὲν οὐδ' ἐγγίσιος, ἐπουρανίου δὲ καὶ ἀγγελικῆς τεύξεως, ἐν τῇ τέλει τοῦ αἰῶνος γινώσκουσα, ὅπῃ καὶ ἅδῃ κατὰ ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, καὶ ἀποδοῦναι ἕκαστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἐργασθέντα αὐτοῦ. EUSEB. Hist. Eccl. iii. 20.)

³ EUSEB. Hist. Eccl. lib. vii. c. 24.; and see lib. iii. c. 28.

⁴ HIERON. Comm. in Is. in Pref. ad libr. 18.

⁵ See the preceding page.

⁶ See EUSEB. iii. c. ult. HIERON. in loc. cit. et passim. THEOPHAST. Heret. Fab. lib. 2. c. 3. tom. 4. p. 330. ed. Schultze; &c. &c.

Now I will not enter upon the question whether this doctrine is true or false, for that might seem to involve a determination of the very point in dispute; nor will I press the *argumentum ad hominem* against our opponents, as not receiving what has such witness in its favour, because they may justly take refuge in the admissions of Justin and Irenæus, that there were those among Christians who did not embrace it, as showing that there was not catholic consent for it. But the conclusion (the, as it appears to me, irrefragable conclusion) that I draw from it is this, That a doctrine may be put forth as the indubitably correct interpretation of Scripture, and an Apostolical tradition, by a great number of the most esteemed Fathers, and consequently might bear to us the appearance of having the catholic consent of the early church in its favour, (judging, as our opponents do, by the few remains we happen to possess,) which was really but the view taken by a portion of the church; and moreover, that what seems, if we are to judge with certainty from the few authors that remain to us, to have been the *prevailing* doctrine of the church for a long period, and received as one handed down by a successional delivery from the oral teaching of the Apostles, may afterwards have been so repudiated by the great majority, that you can barely find a supporter of it, and will generally see it loaded with obloquy; and therefore either that it was not really the prevailing doctrine, or that the prevailing doctrine became corrupted at too early a period for us to know precisely, from the works that remain to us, what it was.

To this case Mr. Newman has alluded; and his mode of getting over the difficulty, is by assuming that "the early opinions concerning the Millennium," "probably in no slight degree" "originated in a misunderstanding of Scripture;"¹ an assumption which, after the extracts given above, needs no reply; and which, if true, does not help his cause in the least; for though it was held to be supported by Scripture, it was handed down as also an oral Apostolical tradition; and he thinks that at any rate "such local rumours about matters of fact cannot be put on a level with catholic tradition concerning matters of doctrine."² Now the notion is new to me that a doctrine is more easily handed down than a fact; and the point now under consideration is, as it appears to me, a doctrine. It certainly was so propounded by Irenæus and Justin. And I would ask, "what matter of doctrine has a tradition in its favour, during the earliest times of the church, so catholic as this? Mr. Newman adds,—“Certainly in Egypt in the third century they seem to have had their origin in a misconstruction of Scripture. Euseb. Hist. vii. 24.”³ I can

¹ *Ibid.* p. 308.

² *Ib.*

³ *Ib.*

see nothing more, however, in this passage, than that those who supported the doctrine, supported it, as Justin and Irenæus did before them, by testimonies of Scripture; believing those testimonies to be the proper proofs of all doctrines, even at that early period; and I would particularly commend to Mr. Newman's observation the account there given us by Dionysius of Alexandria of a disputation he held with some of those who were attached to this doctrine; in which he tells us, in praise of his opponents, that they, "acting most conscientiously and sincerely, and with hearts laid open to God's view, fully received *those* things that were established by proofs and testimonies taken from the *Holy Scriptures*."¹

The two next cases I would notice, are instances of unfounded claims to Apostolical tradition, on points connected with the rites of the church; namely, respecting the time of observing Easter, and the re-baptization of those baptized by heretics.

I would point out, then, on this head,—

(2.) The disputes respecting the time of observing Easter.

The account of this matter is preserved to us by Eusebius, who tells us that towards the close of the second century "no small controversy being raised, because the churches (*ἐκκλησίαι*) of all Asia supposed, as *from a more antient tradition*, that they ought to observe the fourteenth day of the Moon as the salutary feast of Easter, being the day on which the Jews were commanded to kill the lamb; and that they ought always on that day, on whatever day of the week it might happen, to terminate their fastings; when, nevertheless, it was not the custom of the churches over the rest of the whole world to celebrate it in this manner, who observed the custom *derived from apostolical tradition*, and still prevailing; viz., that they ought not to put an end to their fastings on any other day but that of the resurrection of our Saviour; upon this account synods and assemblies of bishops met. And all of them with one consent, did by their letters certify their brethren everywhere of the ecclesiastical decree; viz., that the mystery of our Lord's resurrection should never be celebrated on any other day but Sunday; and that on that day only we should observe to terminate the fast before Easter. There is at this time extant the decree (*γράφη*) of those who then were assembled in Palestine, over whom Theophilus, bishop of the church in Cæsarea, and Narcissus, bishop of that in Jerusalem, presided. In like manner, also, another of those assembled at Rome concerning the same question, showing that its bishop at that time was Victor. Also of the bishops in Pontus, over whom Palmas, as being the most antient, presided.

¹ See the passage quoted below, ch. 16. under "Dionysius of Alexandria."

Also of the churches in Gallia, of which Irenæus was bishop. Moreover, of those in Osdroenna and the cities there, and a private letter of Bachyllus, bishop of the church of the Corinthians; and of most others also; all of whom having uttered one and the same opinion and sentiment, gave the same judgment; and this we have mentioned was their unanimous determination."¹

But, on the other hand, when this judgment was communicated to the churches of Asia, they, as Eusebius tells us, "stoutly maintained that they ought to observe the custom that came to them by antient tradition;"² and their bishop, Polycrates, wrote back to Victor, bishop of Rome, as follows;—"We therefore," he says, "observe the true day unaltered, having neither added to nor taken from [what has been delivered to us]. For in Asia lie the great seeds (*σπέρματα*) [of the church], who shall rise in the day of the Lord's advent, in which he shall come from heaven with glory, and raise all the saints: viz., Philip, one of the twelve Apostles who died at Hierapolis, and his two daughters that lived to a great age as virgins, and his other daughter who possessed, during her life, the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, who rests at Ephesus. And moreover John, who reposed on the bosom of our Lord, who became a priest, and wore a golden plate, who was also a martyr and a teacher. He died at Ephesus. Moreover, also, Polycarp the bishop and martyr of Smyrna. And Thraseas, the bishop and martyr from Eumenia, who died at Smyrna. And why need I mention Sagaris, bishop and martyr, who died at Laodicea? Moreover, the blessed Papirius also; and Melito the eunuch, who enjoyed the peculiar gifts of the Holy Spirit during the whole of his life, who lies at Sardis, awaiting the visitation from heaven, in which he shall rise from the dead. *These all observed Easter on the fourteenth day, according to the Gospel; transgressing in nothing, but walking strictly according to the rule of faith.* And I also, the least of all of you, Polycrates, [so act], according to the tradition of my relations, some of whom I have followed. There were, indeed, seven bishops related to me. And I am the eighth. And my relations always observed the day when the people [i. e. the Jews] removed the leaven. I therefore, brethren, being sixty-five years old in the Lord, and *having had communication with brethren from all parts of the world*, and having read through all the Holy Scriptures, am not alarmed at the threats directed against me. For those who are greater than I, have said, It behoves us to obey God, rather than men." And he adds afterwards, that he had called together very many bishops to give

¹ Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. v. c. 23.

² Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. v. c. 24.

their opinion on the matter; and that they entirely approved of what he had written.¹ And Irenæus, in his letter to Victor, reminds him that Polycarp had thus observed the day; and, that when he came to Rome, Anicetus, the bishop of Rome, who observed the contrary practice, could not induce him to forsake it; "inasmuch," says Irenæus, "as he had always so observed it with John the disciple of the Lord, and the rest of the Apostles, with whom he had been conversant."²

And the difference, as we learn from Irenæus, extended also to the previous fast; for he tells us that "some think they ought to fast one day; others, two; others, more."³ And he thinks it probable that the difference might arise from some bishops being negligent, *and allowing that to go down to posterity as a custom, which was introduced through simplicity and ignorance.*⁴

Here, then, surely we have a remarkable instance how easily even a practice might be introduced, under the name of an apostolical tradition, which had no such sanction for it; and this, as Irenæus thinks, might arise, even in the second century, from the negligence of bishops allowing that to go down to posterity as a custom, which was introduced through simplicity and ignorance; and thus the name of Apostolical tradition be pleaded for that which was altogether abhorrent to the usages of the Apostles. And, be it observed, that in the case before us, the evidence (taking that which remains to us) appears to preponderate in favour of that usage which is not now followed.⁵

So that our learned Dean Comber remarks on this matter, "Though Binius's notes brag of Apostolical and universal tradition, the bishops of Asia produced a contrary tradition, and called it Apostolical, for keeping Easter at a different time; *which shows how uncertain a ground tradition is for articles of faith*, when it varied so much in delivering down a practical rite through little more than one century."⁶

Before we pass on, let us observe the way in which this whole dispute is spoken of early in the fifth century, by one whose "peculiar judgment and diligence" are praised both by Valesius and our own Cave,—the historian Socrates. "I think it not unreasonable," he says, "to declare in short what comes into my

¹ Euseb. H. E. lib. v. c. 24.

² Ib.

³ Ib.

⁴ Ib.

⁵ See farther particulars relating to this matter, in Epiphani. Adv. her. in her. 70. §§ 9, 10, and Athanas. De Synod. Arim. § 5. p. 719. (ed. Ben.) and Ep. ad African. Episc. § 2. p. 892, where Athanasius acknowledges that the churches of Syria, Cilicia, and Mesopotamia, at the time of the Nicene Council, all celebrated Easter at the time of the Jewish Passover.

⁶ Roman Forgeries, p. 33.; or in Bishop Gibson's *Promernative*, vol. 3.

mind concerning Easter. Neither the ancients nor the moderns who have studiously followed the Jews had, in my judgment, any just or rational cause of contending so much about this festival. For they considered not with themselves that when the Jewish religion was changed into Christianity, those accurate observances of the Mosaic law and the types of things future wholly ceased. And this carries along with it its own demonstration. For no one of Christ's laws has permitted the Christians to observe the rites of the Jews. Moreover, on the contrary, the Apostle has expressly forbid this, and does not only reject circumcision, but also *advises against contending about festival days*. Wherefore, in his Epistle to the Galatians, his words are these, 'Tell me, ye that desire to be under the Law, do ye not hear the Law?' [iv. 21.] And having spent some few words in his discourse hereof, he demonstrates that the people of the Jews are servants, but that those who have followed Christ are called to liberty. Moreover it is his admonition that days, and months, and years, should in no wise be observed. Besides, in his Epistle to the Colossians, he does loudly affirm that such observations are a shadow. Wherefore he says, 'Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of any holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come.' [ii. 16, 17.] And in the Epistle to the Hebrews, this very Apostle does confirm the same things in these words, 'For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the Law.' [vii. 12.] *The Apostle therefore and the Gospels have no where imposed the yoke of servitude on those who have approached the preaching of the faith, but have left the feast of Easter and the other festivals to be honoured by their gratitude and benevolence who have had benefits conferred upon them on those days.* Wherefore in regard men love festivals, because thereon they have a cessation from their labours, each person in every place according to his own pleasure has by a certain custom celebrated the memory of the saving passion. *For neither our Saviour nor his Apostles have enjoined us by any law to observe this festival. Nor have the Gospels or the Apostles threatened us with any mulct, punishment, or curse, as the Mosaic Law does the Jews.* For it is merely for the history's sake, in order to a publishing of the reproach of the Jews, because they polluted themselves with blood on their very festivals, that it has been recorded in the gospels that our Saviour suffered even on the days of unleavened bread. Moreover it was not the Apostles' design to make laws concerning festival days, but to introduce good life and piety. And it seems to me, that as many other things in several places have been established by custom, so the feast of Easter, also had a peculiar observation

amongst all persons from some old usage, *in regard none of the Apostles as I have said have made any determinate decree about it.* Now that the observation of this festival had its original amongst all men in the primitive times from custom rather than law, the things themselves do demonstrate." He then notices, as a proof, the great variety there was as to the time of observing it, and adds, "*The Quartodecimans do affirm that the observation of the fourteenth day of the moon was delivered to them by John the Apostle. But the Romans and those in the western parts say, that the usage in force with them was delivered by the Apostles Peter and Paul. Notwithstanding neither of these two parties can produce any WRITTEN [OR, SCRIPTURAL TESTIMONY in confirmation hereof.]*"

And having hence taken occasion to notice "the different usages of churches" respecting rites, particularly as to the time and mode of fasting, he adds, "*And in regard no one can produce a command IN WRITING [OR, SCRIPTURE] concerning this thing, it is manifest that the Apostles left every one to his own will and free choice in this case, to the end that no person might be compelled through fear or necessity to the performance of what is good.*"

Hence he proceeds to notice the variety in the time and mode of conducting their religious assemblies, and respecting divers ecclesiastical usages, the diversity of which according to the account he there gives is not a little remarkable, and thus concludes,—"*That there happened many differences upon this account even in the Apostles' times, was a thing not unknown even to the Apostles themselves, as the book of the Acts does attest. For when the Apostles understood that a disturbance was raised amongst the faithful by reason of a dissension of the Gentiles, being all met together, they promulged a divine law, drawing it up in form of a Letter; whereby they freed believers from a most burthensome servitude and vain contention about these things, and taught them a most exact way of living well which would lead them to true piety, mentioning to them only such things as necessarily ought to be observed For these are the express words of the Letter, 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost to lay upon you no greater burthen than these necessities to be observed.'* Notwithstanding there are some who, disregarding these precepts, suppose all fornication to be a thing indifferent, but contend about holy days, as if it were for their lives. These persons invert the commands of God, and make laws for themselves, not valuing the decree of the Apostles, nor do they consider that they practise the contrary to those things which 'seemed good' to God."¹

¹ Socrat. Scholast. Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 22. I have given this passage according to the English translation published with Eusebius, &c. Lond. 1709. fol.

Leaving this passage to the careful consideration of the reader, and of the Tractators more especially, I proceed to

(3) The question relating to the rebaptization of those baptized by heretics.

A controversy arose on this subject in the middle of the third century between Cyprian and Stephen, Bishop of Rome, and the question, says Eusebius, was, "whether it was proper that those who went over to the church from any heresy should be purged by baptism."¹

Stephen, Bishop of Rome, held that "from *whatever heresy*" any one should go over to the church, having been *baptized* by the heretics with whom he had been associated, he should be admitted by the imposition of hands,² including even such heresies as those of Marcion, Valentinus and Apelles.³

Cyprian on the contrary held that those who had been baptized out of the church among *heretics or schismatics* ought to be baptized when they went over to the church, and that it was of little use to lay hands upon them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, unless they also received the baptism of the church.⁴

The former opinion was defended by Stephen upon the ground of its being an *Apostolical tradition*. "If any one," he says, "shall have come over to us from *any heresy*, let no new practice be introduced, but that observed which was delivered (*traditum*), namely that there be imposition of hands for repentance."⁵ And we are told by Firmilian that he defended his opinion on the ground that "*the Apostles* forbade that those who came over from any heresy should be baptized, and delivered this to posterity to be observed."⁶

And to this no doubt it is that Cyprian refers when he says, on this subject,—“Nor let any one say, we follow that which we have received from the Apostles, since the Apostles delivered

¹ Εἰ δὲν τοὺς ἐκ ἡαιρέτων ἀποστρέφοντας διὰ λυτρίου καθάρσει. EUSEB. Hist. Eccl. vii. 2.

² Si quis ergo a quacunq; heresi venerit ad nos, nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est, ut manus illi imponatur in poenitentiam. Cit. a Cypr. in Ep. 74, ad Pompeium.

³ Cypr. Ep. 74, ad Pomp.

⁴ Eos qui sint foris extra Ecclesiam tincti, et apud hæreticos et schismaticos profana aquæ labe maculati, quando ad nos atque ad Ecclesiam, quæ una est, venerint, baptizari oportere; eo quod parum sit eis manum imponere ad accipiendum Spiritum Sanctum nisi accipiant et Ecclesiæ baptismum. Cypr. Ep. 73, ad Steph.

⁵ Vide supra.

⁶ Quantum ad id pertineat quod Stephanus dixit, quasi Apostoli eos qui ab hæresi veniant baptizari prohibuerint, et hoc custodiendum posteris tradiderint, plenissime vos respondistis. Firmil. Ep. ad Cypr. Inter. Op. Cypr. Ep. 75.

that there was only one church and one baptism."¹ And Eusebius tells us, that the reason of Stephen's anger was, that he thought it was not right to introduce any thing new and beyond the tradition that had been in force from the beginning.²

The real state of the case was, that it was the custom at that time in Rome, and some other churches, and therefore was dignified, as every other custom of that church was and is, with the most unscrupulous audacity, with the title of an Apostolical tradition, such a name being well known to be with the multitude an immediate passport to its reception; but *to which many of the customs so observed even in the third century*, as Firmilian tells us,³ *had no right*.

Now it is commonly represented, that on the other side the charge of *innovation* was *admitted*, but that Cyprian, arguing from Scripture, followed a practice which he admitted might be new to the church. This notion, however, is altogether erroneous, as the statements of Cyprian and Firmilian, and others, fully show.

Thus Cyprian says, that his opinion was "*not new, but long before laid down by his predecessors, and observed by him*."⁴ And again;—"It is not a new or suddenly introduced thing with us, that we should hold that those who come over to the church from heretics should be baptized, since it is many years and a long period since a great number of bishops, meeting under Agrippinus, a man whose memory is to be had in honour, decreed this; and between that time and this many thousand heretics in our provinces being converted to the church," have been baptized.⁵ And this decree of Agrippinus and the bishops who were assembled with him, Cyprian says he followed, as being "*pious and legitimate and salutary, and agreeable to the catholic faith and church*."⁶ And he clearly denies the antiquity of the custom pleaded on the other side. For he says,—"*They say that they follow in this antient custom, when among the antients*

¹ Nec quisquam dicat, quod accepimus ab Apostolis hoc sequimur, quando Apostoli non nisi unam Ecclesiam tradiderunt et baptismum unum. Cypr. Ep. 73.

² Αλλ' ὅτι Στέφανος μὴ δὲν τι νεώτερον παρὰ τὴν κρατιστάσαν ἀρχαίαν παράδοσιν ἐκκατατομῇσι οὐκ ἔμελλεν, ἐπὶ ταύτῃ διαφωνεῖν. EUSEB. Hist. Eccl. vii. 3.

³ See Firmil. Ep. ad Cypr. Inter Cypr. Ep. 75.

⁴ Sententiam nostram non novam promimus, sed jam pridem ab antecessoribus nostris statutam et a nobis observatam. Cypr. Ep. 70. Ad Januarium.

⁵ Apud nos autem non nova aut repentina res est, ut baptizandos censeamus eos qui ab hæreticis ad Ecclesiam veniunt, quando multi jam anni sint et longa ætas ex quo sub Agrippino bonæ memoriæ viro convenientes in unum episcopi plurimi hoc statuerint, atque exinde in hodiernum tot millia hæreticorum in provinciis nostris ad Ecclesiam conversi non aspernati sint, &c. . . . ut lavacri vitalis et salutaris baptismi gratiam consequerentur. Cypr. Ep. 73. Ad Jubaian.

⁶ Quorum sententiam et religiosam et legitimam et salutarem fidei et Ecclesiæ Catholicæ congruentem nos etiam secuti sumus. Cypr. Ep. 71. Ad Quintum.

were the first beginnings of heresy and schisms, so that they formed the heretics, who departed from the church, and had been previously baptized among us, whom when they returned to the church as penitents it was not necessary to baptize. Which we also observe at this day; so that as it respects those whom we know to have been baptized in the church, and to have gone over from us to the heretics, if afterwards acknowledging their offence, and rejecting their error, they return to the truth and their mother, (matricem) it is sufficient to lay hands upon them for repentance."¹

Such, also, is the testimony of every one of the eighty-seven bishops convened on this matter by Cyprian, in the third Carthaginian synod. They one and all declare that the baptism of heretics is altogether null and void; and that not as men laying down any new rule on the subject, but merely as witnesses to what had been a principle of the Christian faith from the beginning. The testimonies of these bishops were given by each separately, and are still to be seen in the works of Cyprian.²

The same testimony is borne by Dionysius of Alexandria, the contemporary of Cyprian, who writing on this subject says,—“I have learnt this also, that it is not the case that now at this time the Africans only have introduced this [as some appear to have represented it was], but that *long ago this opinion was maintained by the bishops before us in the most populous churches and synods of the brethren* at Iconium and Synada, and in many places, whose determinations I cannot allow myself to subvert, and throw them into strife and contention; for it is said, Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmarks which thy fathers have set.”³

And lastly, Firmilian, who was Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, still more plainly says,—“We to truth *join also custom*, and to the custom of the Romans oppose custom, but the custom of truth; holding this to have been from the beginning which was delivered by Christ and the Apostle. *Nor do we recollect*

¹ Et dicunt se in hoc veterem consuetudinem sequi; quando apud veteres hæreses et schismatum prima adhuc fuerint initia, ut hi illic essent qui de Ecclesia recedebant, et hic baptizati prius fuerant: quos tunc tamen ad Ecclesiam revertentes et penitentiam agentes necesse non erat baptizare. Quod nos quoque hodie observamus, ut quos constat hic baptizatos esse et a nobis ad hæreticos transiisse, si postmodum peccato suo cognito et errore digesto ad veritatem et matricem redeant, satis sit in penitentiam manum imponere. Cypr. Ep. 71. Ad Quintum.

² See Concil. Carthagin. De baptiz. hæret. inter Op. Cypriani.

³ Μιμνήσκου καὶ τοῦτο, ὅτι μὴ νῦν οἱ ὡς Ἀφρικοὶ μοινοῦν τοῦτο παρρησιαζοῦν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸ πολλοῦ κατὰ τοὺς πρὸ ἡμῶν ἐπισκοποῦντες ἢ τὰς πολυαριθμοτάτας ἐκκλησίας καὶ τὰς συνόδους τῶν ἀδελφῶν ὡς Ἰκονίου καὶ Συνάδος καὶ παρὰ πολλοὺς τοῦτο εἶδεν, ὡς τὰς βουλὰς ἀνατρέπων ὡς ἡμεῖς καὶ ἐροῦμεν αὐτοὺς φεβαλοῦντες οὐκ ἔχομεν. Οὐ γὰρ μεταστροφικὴ ἐστὶν, ἡμεῖς τοὺς πλεονεχτοῦντες αὐτοὺς οἱ πατέρες σου. EUSEB. Hist. Eccl. lib. vii. c. 7.

that this had any beginning with us, since it was always observed here, that we should acknowledge but one church of God, and that we should reckon that only to be holy baptism which was of the holy church."¹ And in this he speaks not as an individual, but as representing the sentiments of a synod of bishops from the neighbouring parts assembled at Iconium.²

So far, then, from admitting that their practice was a novelty in the church, they stoutly maintained the antiquity of the custom. And certainly Tertullian was on their side of the question, for in his Treatise on baptism written before his departure from the church, he says, that the heretics, "without doubt, have not" baptism;³ upon which the learned Pamelius remarks, that it is impossible to deny (*negare non possumus*) that he was of the same opinion as Cyprian, and that perhaps his Greek treatise on baptism in which this opinion was more fully stated was on that account suppressed; a plain confession of his opinion of the mode in which the writings of the primitive church were dealt with by the dominant parties of after times.⁴

And such also appears to have been the opinion of Clement of Alexandria.⁵

But says Mr. Newman, "Cyprian did not profess any *Apostolical tradition* on his side." (p. 204.) No doubt he did not as far as their ORAL tradition was concerned; and the question is, whether he did not herein show more sense and judgment than those who *did* make a claim which they could not substantiate. "The Roman Church," says Mr. Newman, "rested her doctrine simply on Apostolical Tradition," i. e. what she chose to call so, being at most a supposed correct report of it by others; "which," he adds, "by itself might fairly be taken as a sufficient witness in such a point." No doubt the Romish Church is under great obligations to Mr. Newman for his favourable judgments of their reports of "Apostolical tradition;" and on the same ground he may add to these "Apostolical traditions" the worship of images, which Pope Adrian declared to the Second

¹ Ceterum nos veritati et consuetudinem jungimus, et consuetudini Romanorum consuetudinem, sed veritas, opponimus; ab initio hoc tenentes quod a Christo et ab Apostolo traditum est. Nec meminimus, hoc apud nos aliquando capisse, cum semper istuc observatum sit, ut non nisi unam Dei ecclesiam nossemus, et sanctum baptismum non nisi sanctæ ecclesiæ computaremus. Firmil. ad Cypr. Inter Cypr. Ep. 75.

² Plurimi simul convenientes in Iconio diligentissime tractavimus et confirmavimus repudiandum esse omne omnino baptismum quod sit extra Ecclesiam constitutum. Ib.

³ Quem, [i. e. baptismum] quum rite non habeant, sine dubio nan habent, nec cogit numerari quod non habetur; ita nec possunt accipere quia non habent.—TERTULL. De bapt. c. 15.

⁴ Vide Pamel. Annot. in Tertull. p. 656. ed. Col. Agripp. 1617.

⁵ See Strom. lib. i. § 19. p. 377. ed. Potter. (p. 317. ed. Sylburg.)

Nicene Council that the Church of Rome had received by tradition from St. Peter. But Cyprian thought differently, and therefore ventures to ask how this claim can be verified. Whence, saith he, is this tradition? Does it come from Scripture? For God tells us to do that which is written.¹ And he adds observations to which I shall have hereafter to call the attention of the reader, showing that he held that the Scripture only could certify us assuredly of what the Apostles had delivered; and that what they had there delivered was (as he supposed) opposed to the practice defended by Stephen.

And Firmilian still more plainly ridicules this pretence of "Apostolical tradition." "That those," he says, "who are at Rome do not in all things observe those things which were delivered from the beginning, and *in vain pretend the authority of the Apostles*, any one may know from hence, that he may see that there are among them some difference respecting the celebration of Easter, and respecting many other ordinances of divine worship, and that all things are not alike observed there as are observed at Jerusalem."²

The difference, then, between the two parties is just this; that Stephen, in the true Romish spirit, boldly says, The custom which we observe was laid down by the Apostles in their oral teaching, and therefore ought to be observed; just as his successor Adrian said to the Second Nicene Council respecting the worship of images; while Cyprian and his party, while they maintain that the argument from antiquity is, as far as it goes, in favour of their practice, ground its claim to Apostolicity upon Scripture as the chief and *necessary* and *only sure* evidence. And having both those witnesses (as they supposed) with them, they willingly leave Stephen and his party to boast of their knowledge of the *oral* traditions of the Apostles, and Firmilian in particular tells him, it is vain for him to pretend to it.

A more full and clear testimony (I would observe by the way) in favour of the view for which we contend, than is here presented to us in the remarks of Cyprian and Firmilian, can hardly be conceived.

But say our opponents;—True, but this shows how the adoption of such a view leads to error, for Cyprian was here in the wrong.³

¹ Unde est ista traditio, &c. Cypr. Ep. 74. Ad Pomp. See the passage fully quoted ch. 10 below.

² Eos autem qui Romæ sunt non ea in omnibus observare quæ sint ab origine tradita et frustra Apostolorum auctoritatem prætere, scire quis etiam inde potest, quod circa celebrandos dies paschæ et circa multa alia divinæ rei sacramenta vident esse apud illos aliquas diversitates, nec observari illic omnia æqualiter quæ Hierosolymis observantur. Firmil. Ep. ad Cypr. Int. Cypr. Ep. 75.

³ See Newman's Lectures, p. 205.

Now in replying to this I will not stop to remark upon the invalidity of this argument to decide between the principles upon which each acted, but I pass on to ask this question,—Was Stephen right? If not, then is the argument of our opponents from this case in favour of their view completely overthrown; aye, and an additional reason afforded us for discrediting such claims as that made by Stephen. The Apostles, said Stephen and the Church of Rome of his day, ordered that from *whatever* heresy any one should come over to the church, such a convert should not be baptized, but only have hands laid upon him. But what said the most eminent Councils and Fathers on this subject afterwards? “As to those that become Paulianists,” saith the Council of Nice, “and afterwards betake themselves to the Catholic Church, it has already been decreed that they be by all means re-baptized.”¹ “They that turn from the heresy of the Phrygians,” saith the Council of Laodicea, “are with great care to be catechised and baptized by the bishops and priests of the church, though they were among their clergy, and were reckoned of the first rank among them.”² “Those,” saith the Council of Constantinople, “who from among the heretics betake themselves to orthodoxy and to the party of the saved, we receive according to the order and custom subjoined; viz. we receive the Arians, Macedonians, &c., anathematizing all heresy and having anointed them with the sacred ointment we seal them, &c. . . . The Eunomians, who are baptized only with one immersion, and the Montanists, who are here called Phrygians, and the Sabellians, who maintain the Father and Son to be the same . . . and *all other heretics, for there are many of them here* . . . all those of them who are willing to betake themselves to orthodoxy, we receive as we do the Greeks . . . we make them continue a long time in the Church and hear the Scriptures, and then we baptize them.”³

Similar directions are given to the 95th canon of the Sixth Council, (or the Trullan canons) the 8th canon of the Second Nicene Council, the 47th of the Apostolical canons, and the 1st and 47th of the canons of Basil. The opinion of Basil,⁴ indeed, is almost wholly in favour of the view taken by Cyprian and Firmilian, whom he mentions by name in his first canon, and apparently as approving their determinations even with respect to

¹ Περὶ τῶν Παυλιανιστῶν, ὡς προσφύγοντες τῇ καθολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ὅς ἐκτείνονται ἀναβαπτίζεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἑσπερᾶντες. Can. 19. Vide. Biblioth. J. C. Vet. ed. Voell. et Justell. tom. i. p. 34.

² Can. 8. Ib. p. 50.

³ Can. 7. Ib. p. 56.

⁴ See BASIL. Ep. ad Amphiloeb. Ep. 188. (Op. tom. iii. pp. 268—70,) and Ep. 199. (ib. pp. 296, 7.)

those baptized by schismatics, though as the custom was different in different places, he holds it best that the custom of the place should be followed. And as to those baptized by heretics, he expressly says, "It has seemed good to the antients *from the beginning*, altogether to reject the baptism of heretics."¹

And Athanasius pronounces even the baptism of the Arians as well as that of the Manichees, the Phrygians, and the Samosatenians to be "altogether useless and unprofitable."² While the notion of Augustine (and which has been very prevalent in the Western Church since his time) seems to have been, that the baptism of heretics was not valid if not proformed in the name of the Three Persons of the Trinity, but that if so performed, it was valid, whatever sentiments they might hold.³

What now becomes of Stephen's "*Apostolical tradition*," which Mr. Newman tells us, "might by itself fairly be taken as a sufficient witness in such a point?"

And yet this very case is brought by our opponents as a proof of the safety of being guided by "*Apostolical tradition*," i. e. some patristical report of it.

Be it observed, also, that Augustine, though he maintains that the custom he followed was derived from Apostolical tradition, maintains this upon grounds that are not trustworthy, and is evidently conscious that his cause needed better support. For he affirms this on two grounds, one, that it was a custom maintained by the universal church,⁴ which is abundantly disproved by the facts and statements referred to above; the other, that a custom the institution of which could not be traced to those who came after the Apostles ought to be considered Apostolical,⁵ on which evidence of Apostolicity (not to say that it was just as applicable to the practice of Cyprian and his party, if we may believe them, as to the opposite practice) Bishop Taylor justly remarks in the *last* work he wrote, "which in plain meaning is this, we find a custom in the church, and we know not whence it comes, and it is so in this as in many other things, and therefore, let us think the best and believe it came by tradition from the Apostles;" and again further on;—"which kind of rule is some

¹ Εδοξε τοις ἐκ αρχῆς το μὴ τῶν αἱρετικῶν, [i. e. βαπτισμῶν] πᾶντως ἀδοξῆσαι. Fb. p. 269.

² Πᾶντως ὀνόσι καὶ ἀλυσίτατοι. Orat. 2. contr. Arian. § 42. p. 510. ed. Ben. And see § 43. pp. 510, 11.

³ Aug. Cont. litt. Petil. lib. ii. §. 57. tom. 9. col. 236. De unic. bapt. c. 3. ib. col. 529.

⁴ De bapt. contr. Donat lib. v. c. 31. tom. ix. col. 156.

⁵ Illa consuetudo quam etiam tunc [i. e. tempore Cypriani] homines summi versus respicientes non videbant a posterioribus institutam, recte ab Apostolis tradita creditur. De bapt. contr. Don. lib. iv. c. 6. tom. ix. col. 136.

⁶ Diss. from Popery, Pt. 2. § 3. Works, vol. x. p. 433.

thing like what a witty gentleman said of an old man and an old woman in Ireland, that if they should agree to say that they were Adam and Eve, no man living could disprove them . . . This rule is but a precarious pitiful presumption, since every antient custom that any succeeding age hath a mind to continue, may for the credit of it and the ignorance of the original, like new upstart gentlemen, be entitled to an honourable house. 'Every one believes the commandments of his ancestors to be traditions apostolical,' said St. Jerome; and that these came in by private authority, and yet obtained a public name, we have competent warranty from Tertullian. (*De cor. mil. c. 4.*)"¹

In another part of the same work,² Augustine has put these two requisites together, as forming jointly a sufficient proof of Apostolical tradition; in which case the whole argument drops at once from the want of universality in the practice.

Nor does Augustine, while in his controversial zeal against the Donatists he opposes the sentiments of Cyprian, and espouses the cause of his opponent Stephen, seem to remember that his own view was not the same as that of Stephen, and therefore that he must either give up Stephen too, or the apostolicity of his own practice; and in all ways the apostolicity of his own practice was not only destitute of proof but against evidence.

It is manifest, also, that Augustine himself felt the necessity of supporting his cause by some better proofs, and by showing that Scripture was on his side. "Lest," saith he, "I should seem to treat the matter with *human arguments* since *the obscurity of this question* drove great men, in former times of the church, before the schism of Donatus, and men endued with much Christian charity, episcopal Fathers, to differ from one another, &c. . . . I produce *from the Gospel* certain proofs, by which, the Lord helping me, I prove how rightly and truly, according to the Divine will, it has been ordained," &c.³

And so it appeared to Bishop Taylor, who, after the observations quoted above, adds, "But it seems himself was not sure that so little a foundation could carry so big a weight; he therefore plainly hath recourse to Scripture in this question: 'Whether is more pernicious, not to be baptized, or to be rebaptized, is *hard*

¹ Dissuasive from Popery, Pt. 2. § 3. Works, x. p. 445.

² Quod universa tenet Ecclesia nec conciliis institutum sed semper retentum est, non nisi auctoritate apostolica traditum rectissime creditur. *De bapt. contr. Don. lib. iv. c. 24. tom. ix. col. 140.*

³ Jam enim ne videar humanis argumentis id agere, quoniam questionis hujus obscuritas prioribus Ecclesiæ temporibus ante schisma Donati magnos viros et magna caritate præditos patres episcopos ita inter se compulsi salva pace disceptare, &c. . . . ex Evangelio profero certa documenta quibus Domino adjuvante demonstro quam recte placuerit et vere secundum Deum, &c. *De bapt. contr. Donat. lib. i. c. 7. tom. ix. col. 84.*

to judge; nevertheless, having recourse to the standard of our Lord, where the monuments of this are not estimated by human sense but by Divine authority, I find concerning each of them the sentence of our Lord' (Cont. Don. lib. iv. c. 14, &c., 17 and 24), to wit in the Scriptures."¹

And this reference to Scripture proof is repeated in many other parts of the same treatise.

Are we to be told, then, that Cyprian erred because he rested upon the authority of Scripture?

There is one more remark, also, which the consideration of this case suggests, viz. how little we can trust the reports given by many of the Fathers with respect to such matters. For in the case before us, we are told by Eusebius that Cyprian was the *first* to introduce the practice he followed.² Nor are the statements of Augustine free from similar error.³ But the Monk of Lerins has, as usual, settled everything without hesitation to his own liking, and thus *faithfully* chronicles this matter. "This," saith he, "hath ever been usual in the church, that the more religious a man hath been, the more readily hath he always resisted novel inventions; examples whereof everywhere are plentiful, but for brevity's sake I will only make choice of some one, which shall be taken from the Apostolic See, by which all men may see most plainly with what force always, what zeal, what endeavour, the blessed succession of the blessed Apostles have defended the integrity of that religion which they once received. Therefore, in times past, Agrippinus, of venerable memory, Bishop of Carthage, *the first of all mortal men*, maintained this assertion against the divine Scripture, *against the rule of the Universal Church, AGAINST THE MIND OF ALL THE PRIESTS OF HIS TIME, AGAINST THE CUSTOM AND TRADITION OF HIS FOREFATHERS*, that rebaptization was to be practised. Which presumption of his procured so great hurt to the Church, that not only it gave all heretics a pattern of sacrilege, but also ministered occasion of error to some Catholics. When, therefore, EVERYWHERE ALL MEN *exclaimed against the novelty of the doctrine, and all priests in all places, each one according to his zeal did oppose*, then Pope Stephen, of blessed memory, Bishop of the Apostolic See, resisted, in common indeed with the rest of his fellow bishops, but yet more than the rest, thinking it, as I suppose, reason so much to excel all other in devotion towards the faith, as he was superior to them in authority of place. To conclude, in his Epistle, which then was sent to Africa, he decreed the same in these words; That nothing was to be

¹ Works, vol. x. p. 434.

² Πρωτος τότε (or, τωι τότε) Κυπριανος της κατα Καρχηδονα παροιγιας ποιηται, ουδ' αλλος η δια λουτρον προτιμοι της πλαιης αποκαθαρμασιως προσεβαλιν δυι εγρητο. EUSEB. HIST. Eccl. lib. vii. c. 8.

³ Vide August. De bapt. contr. Donat. lib. iv. c. 6. tom. ix. col. 126.

innovated, but that which came by tradition ought to be observed. For that holy and prudent man knew well, that the nature of piety could admit nothing else, but only to deliver to our children all things with the same fidelity with which we received them of our forefathers, and that we ought to follow religion whither it doth lead us, and not to lead religion whither it pleases us; and that it is proper to Christian modesty and gravity not to leave unto posterity our own inventions, but to keep that which our predecessors left us. What, therefore, was the end of that whole business? What but that which is common and usual, to wit, *antiquity was retained, novelty exploded*. But perhaps that very invention of novelty lacked patrons and defenders? To which I say, on the contrary, that it had such pregnant wits, such flow of eloquence, such number of defenders, such show of truth, such testimonies of divine Scripture, but understood evidently after a new and naughty fashion, that all that conspiracy and schism should have seemed unto me invincible, had not the sole cause of such turmoil, **THE VERY PROFESSION ITSELF OF NOVELTY**, so taken in hand, so defended, so recommended, left it without support. To conclude, what force had the council or decree of Africa? By God's providence none, but all was abolished, disannulled, abrogated, as dreams, as fables, as superfluous. And, O strange change of the world! the authors of that opinion are judged to be catholics, but the followers of the same heretics; the masters discharged, the scholars condemned; the writers of those books shall be children of the kingdom, *but hell shall receive their maintainers*. For who is so mad as to doubt but that that light of all saints, bishops and martyrs, the most blessed Cyprian, with the rest of his companions, shall reign with Christ for ever? And contrariwise, who is so wicked to deny that the Donatists, and such other pests, which vaunt that they do practise rebaptization by the authority of that Council, shall *burn for ever with the devil?*¹

I leave this passage to the reader's reflections, only remarking, that we have here very sufficient evidence how far this writer is to be trusted in his accounts, and also an exemplification of what his "*all men everywhere*" *practically* means.

The excuse of ignorance may be his; for, as Basil tells us, the Western church often neither knew the true state of affairs in the Eastern, nor went the way to learn it;² but this is but a poor apology for one who professes to know what "*everybody always everywhere*" thought about the matter, and to ground his deter-

¹ Vinc. Ler. Commonit. § 6. I give it in the translation lately published at Oxford.

² Οὗτοι ἴσασι τὰ παρ' ἡμῶν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, οὗτοι τῇ ἰδῶν δι' ἡς αὐτοὶ μαρτυροῦν καταδύχονται. BASIL. Ep. 239. ad Euseb. tom. iii. p. 368. ed. Ben.

minations thereon; and, indeed, cannot, after all, fully account for the statements he has here made; which I suppose no candid mind can read but with disgust.

(4) Even in points in which one might have expected "tradition" to have preserved the truth for some time at least, we find it fail.

Thus as to the duration of our Lord's public ministry, we are told by Clement of Alexandria that he preached only *one year*,¹ and by Origen that he preached a year and a few months.² Irenæus, on the other hand, shows how contrary this notion is to the testimony of the Gospels themselves, but with equal error asserts that our Lord was forty or fifty years old at the time of his death, for which he refers to Scripture,³ and *tradition*, asserting that all the elders who had been acquainted with St. John in Asia, testified that he had delivered this to them; some of whom had seen other Apostles, and heard the same account from them.⁴ I do not understand, therefore, what Mr. Newman can mean when he tells us that this statement of Irenæus is one of the things which "improperly go by the name of traditions," and "*make out no claim to be considered Apostolical.*"⁵

And were we to proceed to a general review of the rites and customs of the church, we should find many instances of claims made by various Fathers to the sanction of Apostolical tradition for rites and customs which no one in the present day would affirm were ordained by the Apostles; as, for instance, the trine immersion in baptism, which Athanasius, Jerome, Augustine, and Ambrose, all call an apostolical tradition.⁶

So that even in matters of fact, and ecclesiastical rites and ordinances, we find the Fathers that remain to us very insufficient witnesses to assure us of what is or is not an Apostolical tradition. *A fortiori*, then, is their testimony insufficient in doctrinal points, where the liability to misapprehension and mistake is so much greater.

There is one remark, however, which I would here make to

¹ *Ἐνίκατον μόνον*. Strom. lib. i. p. 407. ed. Potter. And see other similar testimonies in the note of Potter on this place.

² *Ἐνίκατον πῶς καὶ μῆνας ὀλίγους ᾤδαξεν*. Philocal. c. 1. In his Commentary on Luke iv. he makes the time *one year*. See Potter not. in Clem. Al. p. 407.

³ Adv. hæres. lib. ii. c. 22. ed. Mass. c. 39. ed. Grab.

⁴ Πάντες οἱ πρῶτοι μαρτυροῦσι, οἱ κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν ἰωάννη τῷ τοῦ Κυρίου μαθητῇ συμβέβηκεν, παραδίδεσθαι ταῦτα τοῦ ἰωάννου. Παρρησίᾳ γὰρ αὐτοῖς μέχρι τῶν Τριῶν χρόνων. Quidam autem eorum non solum Joannem sed et alios Apostolos viderunt et hæc eadem ab ipsis audierunt, et testantur de hujusmodi relatione. Ib. The Greek is preserved by Euseb. H. E. lib. iii. c. 23.

⁵ P. 203.

⁶ Another instance may be seen in Epiphani. Hæres. 28. § 6. tom. 1. p. 114, on which see the remarks of Whitby in his Comm. on 1 Cor. xv. 29.

prevent being misunderstood, viz. that I am not here questioning the competency or fidelity of the Fathers as witnesses to those facts and practices of which they were themselves cognizant; or the value of their testimony in these matters. Thus, for instance, their testimony to Episcopacy, infant baptism and the observance of the Lord's day, as usages in force in their time, is invaluable as giving us an important *confirmation* of the correctness of our interpretation of those passages of Scripture which show us the apostolicity of those usages.

But that we have any patristical testimony which of itself is sufficient to assure us what was the oral teaching of the Apostles, either in a matter of doctrine or practice, we altogether deny.¹

When taunted therefore, as our opponents sometimes seem inclined to taunt us, with despising "Apostolical traditions," we say with *their own chosen witness*, Bishop Patrick, "This is a downright calumny; for we have ever owned that *Apostolical tradition*, if we knew *where to find them in any place but the Bible*, are to be received and followed, if delivered by them as of necessary obligation. BUT WE DO LIKEWISE SAY, THAT WE KNOW NO SUCH TRADITIONS." (Answ. to Touchst. p. 27.)

Moreover as the sanction of Apostolical tradition was thus groundlessly pleaded by some of the Fathers in favour of various points, so also is their testimony not fully to be depended upon when claiming, as they not unfrequently do, the sanction of *the Church*.

We have already seen in a former page how Origen's predilections influenced him in this respect, and that according to Jerome he made his own fancies mysteries of *the Church*.²

And the reader of the Fathers will find this to be constantly the case. Their own views are often unhesitatingly stamped by them with the authority of "*the Church*," when to impartial observers it is evident that such a claim is wholly unfounded.

Thus Jerome, in more than one place,³ maintains it to be the

¹ The degree of deference due to the rites and customs of the primitive church is a question which it would be out of place to discuss here, but I would observe that the remarks made above must not be taken as denying that they have a claim upon our respect and regard. Of him who claims more than this in their behalf I would ask, how it is that all parties have for ages given up many that were esteemed of *necessary* observation in the primitive church, as, for instance, standing at public prayers on Sundays, and from Easter to Whitsuntide, ordered by the Council of Nice, of the non-observance of which Tertullian says, *nefas ducimus*. (De Cor. c. 3.) But on this subject we shall have to speak more at large hereafter. (See chap. 8.)

² See p. 187 above.

³ Cain et Abel, primi ex primis hominibus, unde habuere animas? Omne deinceps humanum genus quibus animarum censetur exordium? Utrum ex tradace

doctrine of the church that the souls of infants are created by God, and transfused into them before their birth; and he is exceedingly indignant at Ruffinus for venturing to express a doubt on the matter, and to say that though he had read much on the subject on all sides, he still felt ignorant as to the origin of the soul. "Do you wonder," saith he, "that the reproaches of the brethren are raised against you, when you declare that you are ignorant of that which *the Churches of Christ* profess to know?"¹ And what makes this more remarkable is, that he admits elsewhere that Tertullian, Apollinaris, and *the greatest part of the Western ecclesiastics* maintained that the soul was *ex traduce*.²

The same assertion, however, was made by Theodoret and by Gennadius.

Thus Theodoret says,—"*The Church . . . believing the Divine Scripture, affirms that the soul is created together with the body, not having its origin from man, but brought into existence after the formation of the body by the will of the Creator.*"³

And Gennadius reckons it among the doctrines of *the church*, that the souls of men are not derived from their parents, but

juxta bruta animalia, ut quomodo corpus ex corpore sic anima generetur ex anima? An rationabiles creaturæ desiderio corporum paulatim ad terram delapsæ, novissime etiam humanis illigatæ corporibus sint? An certe, *quod ecclesiasticum est*, secundum eloquia Salvatoris, Pater meus usque modo operatur, et ego operor; [Jo. 5. 17.] et illud Isaïæ? [Zech. xii. 1.] Qui format spiritum hominis in ipso; et in Psalmis, Qui fingit per singulos corda eorum [Ps. xxxii. 15.] *quotidie Deus fabricatur animas*. Ad Pammach. adv. error. Joh. Hierosol. § 22. tom. ii. c. 427. ed. Vall. Ven. Ep. 38. tom. iv. p. 2. col. 318. ed. Ben.—Quæris a me quid ipse de animabus sentiam; ut cum professus fuero stratim invadas. Et si dixeris *illud ecclesiasticum*, Quotidie Deus operatur animas, et in corpore eas miuit nascentium, illico magistri tendiculas proferas, et, Ubi est justitia Dei ut de adulterio incestuque nascentibus animas largiatur? Adv. Ruffin. lib. iii. § 28. tom. ii. c. 557. ed. Vall. Ven. tom. iv. p. 2. col. 464. ed. Ben.

¹ Miraris si contra te fratrum scandala concitentur, quum id nescire te jures quod Christi Ecclesiæ se nosse fateantur? Adv. Ruffin. lib. ii. § 10. tom. ii. c. 500. ed. Vall. Ven. tom. iv. p. 2. col. 399. ed. Ben.

² Super animæ statu memini vestre questioncule, immo maxime ecclesiastica questionis, Utrum lapsa de celo sit, ut Pythagoras philosophus, omnesque Platonici et Origenes putant, an a propria Dei substantia, ut Stoici Manichæus et Hippolytus Priscilliani hæresis suspicantur; an in thesauro habeantur Dei olim condite, ut quidam ecclesiastici stulta persuasionem confidunt; an quotidie a Deo fiant et mittantur in corpora secundum illud quod in Evangelio scriptum est, 'Pater meus usque modo operatur et ego operor'; an certe ex traduce, ut Tertullianus, Apollinaris, et maxima pars Occidentalium autumant; ut quomodo corpus ex corpore sic anima nascatur ex anima, et simili cum brutis animantibus conditione subsistat. Super quo quid mihi videretur, in opusculis contra Ruffinum scripsisse me novi, &c. Hieron. Ep. ad Marcell. et Anapsych. Ep. 126. ed. Vall. Ven. Inter August. Ep. 165. Op. Aug. tom. 2. col. 582.

³ Ἡ δὲ Εκκλησία . . . τὴ θνῆκα πνεύματος ὡς ἀνὰ λῆξιν, τὴ ψυχὴν συνδημιουργεῖσθαι τῷ σωματί, οὐκ ἐκ τῆς ὕλης τοῦ σωματός ἐκχύσας τῆς δημιουργίας τὰς ἀνομίας, ἀλλὰ τὴν βούλησιν τοῦ Πατρὸς μετὰ τὴν τοῦ σωματός συνστάσεσιν διακρίσσει. Theodoret. Hæret. Fab. lib. v. c. 9. tom. iv. pp. 413, 14. ed. Schulze.

that the body only is thus propagated, and that after the formation of the body the soul is created by God and infused into it before the birth.¹

But that this claim to the sanction of *the church* for this doctrine was wholly unfounded we have abundant proof. For Origen expressly tell us, as we have already seen,² that with respect to the origin of the soul there was no clear testimony preserved in the church. This also clearly follows from the words of Jerome himself in the last of the passages we have quoted from him above.

Augustine openly professes that he could not make up his mind in the matter,³ and is evidently disinclined to the reception of the opinion advocated by Jerome, since in his letter to him, advertising to the passages we have quoted from him above, he asks him how his opinion can be reconciled with the doctrine of original sin;⁴ and in his last work (The Retractions) he repeats the expression of his doubt in the matter, remarking that "with respect to the origin of the soul, how it becomes united to the body, whether it springs from that one which was first created, when man was made a living soul, or whether the souls of all are created alike, neither did I then [i. e. when he wrote his book "Contra Academicos"] know, nor do I yet know." And again, alluding to his letter of inquiry on the subject to Jerome, he tells us that Jerome replied that he *had not leisure* to answer it, which had induced him not to publish his letter to Jerome until after Jerome's death, but that he then published the letter "for this purpose, that the reader might be admonished either *not to inquire at all* how the soul was given to those who were born, or at any rate to admit on *a most obscure point* such a solution of the question as should not be opposed to things which are most clear, which *the catholic faith* maintains concerning original

¹ Animas hominum non esse ab initio inter ceteras intellectuales naturas nec simul creatas, sicut Origines fingit; neque cum corporibus per coitum seminatæ sicut Luciferiani et Cyrillus et aliqui Latinorum presumptores affirmant, quasi naturæ consequentiam servantes. Sed dicimus creationem animæ solum Creatorem omnium nosse, et corpus tantum per conjugii copulam seminari, Dei vero iudicio coagulari in vulva et compingi atque formari, ac formate jam corpore animam creari et infundi, ut vivat in utero homo ex anima constans et corpore, et egrediatur vivus ex utero plenus humana substantia. Gennad. De eccles. dogmat. c. 14. Inter Op. August. tom. 8. app. col. 77.

² See p. 184 above.

³ August. Ep. 166. Ad Hieron. tom. ii. col. 583 et seq., and Ep. 190. Ad Optat. ib. col. 700 et seq.

⁴ Ep. 166. Ad Hieron. § 10. tom. ii. col. 587.

⁵ Quod attinet ad ejus [i. e. animi] originem, qua fit ut sit in corpore, utrum de illo uno sit, qui primum creatus est, quando factus est homo in animam vivam, an similiter ita fiant singulis singuli, nec tunc sciebam nec adhuc scio. Retract. lib. i. c. 1. tom. i. col. 4, 5.

sin in the indubitable damnation of infants unless they are regenerated in Christ."¹

And lastly, this division of opinion among the Fathers on this point is particularly noted by Gregory the Great, and the question admitted to be one which could not be determined.²

Before I pass on, I would point the reader's attention to a remark of Augustine in the passage just quoted, as another illustration of what we are now endeavouring to prove, viz. that in which he says that it was "*the catholic faith*" that unbaptized infants were indubitably lost. Nothing can more fully show how unhesitatingly the sanction of "*the church*," and "*the catholic faith*," was claimed by the Fathers for doctrines which had no pretence to such a distinction. It is here claimed by Augustine in a case where he is strongly accused by many of being himself the father of the doctrine.³

So again it is reckoned by Gennadius among the doctrines of the church, that "nothing is to be believed to be by nature incorporeal and invisible, but God alone, that is, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. . . . Every creature is corporeal, the angels and all the heavenly powers are corporeal, although not of a fleshly subsistence."⁴ And the same is asserted by John, Bishop of Thessalonica, who says, "*The catholic church* acknowledges them [i. e. the angels] to be beings of an intellectual nature, not indeed altogether incorporeal and invisible, but having bodies of a subtile texture, and airy or fiery, according to that which is written, 'who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flame of fire.'"⁵

¹ Ad hoc edidi, ut qui legit admoneatur aut non querere omnino quomodo detur anima nascentibus, aut certe de re obscurius eam solutionem questionis hujus admittere quam contraria non sit apertissimis rebus, quas de originali peccato fides catholica novit in parvulis nisi regerentur in Christo sine dubitatione dammandis. *Retract. lib. ii. c. 45. tom. i. col. 57.*

² De origine animæ inter sanctos Patres requisitio non parva versata est; sed utrum ipsa ab Adam decederit, an certe singulis detur, incertum remansit; eamque in hac vita insolubilem fassi sunt esse questionem. Gravis enim est questio, nec valet ab homine comprehendere; quia si de Adam substantia anima cum carne nascitur, cur non etiam cum carne moritur? Si vero cum carne non nascitur, cur in ea carne quæ de Adam prolata est obligata peccatis tenetur? Sed cum hoc sit incertum, illud incertum non est, quia nisi sacri baptismatis gratia fuerit renatus homo, omnis anima originalis peccati vinculis est obstricta. *GRÆG. MAGN. Epist. lib. ix. indict. 2. Ep. 52. tom. ii. col. 970. ed. Par. 1705.*

³ See Bishop Taylor's *Lib. of Proph. § 8, &c.*

⁴ Nihil incorporeum et invisibile natura credendum, nisi solum Deum, id est, Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum. . . . Creatura omnis corporea est; angeli et omnes celestes virtutes corporeæ, licet non carne subsistant. *GENNAD. De eccles. dogmat. cc. 11, 12. Inter. Op. Aug. tom. viii. app. col. 77.*

⁵ Νομους μὴ αὐτοὺς ἡ καθολικὴ Ἐκκλησία γινώσκει, οὐ μὴ ἀσώματους πατρὶ καὶ ἀσώματος, ἀλλ' οἱ Ἕλληες οὗτοι, λατρευομένους διὰ καὶ ἀσώματος ἢ ποσώματος, κατὰ τὸ γράμμα, ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα, καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πῦρ φλογισ-

But this certainly was not the doctrine of *the church*, for the contrary is distinctly maintained by Chrysostom, Theodoret, Gregory Nyssen, and many others.¹

Thus Chrysostom speaks of the angels as being *incorporeal*.² And Theodoret says,—“We know that the angels are of an incorporeal nature, but they assume appearances for the benefit of the beholders.”³ And again,—“Their natures are not seen, for they are incorporeal;” and after adding that they assume various appearances for the sake of those to whom they appear, he observes, “but they are not of various forms, but as intellectual natures are incorporeal, but as need may require their Lord clothes them with certain forms to appear in.”⁴ And Gregory Nyssen speaks of the angels as having “an incorporeal nature,”⁵ and being “incorporeal and immaterial.”⁶

Thus, also, Gennadius reckons it as a doctrine of the church, that the angels and all the heavenly powers were made when the darkness yet covered the waters.⁷ But, as we have already seen, Origen tells us that when and how the angels were created, is a point not clearly manifested in the teaching of the church.⁸ And so say others.⁹

Many other of the doctrines attributed by Gennadius to *the church*, are equally destitute of such authority.

Innumerable examples of such unfounded claims might be adduced from the Fathers. But these are amply sufficient for our purpose; viz., to show how little we can depend upon such claims in themselves.

Nor must we fail to recollect, that such claims were equally made by the heretics and by Eusebius (as we shall show presently,¹⁰) in favour of unorthodox doctrine, even on the highest points of faith. Whatever was maintained was sure to be described by its supporters as the doctrine of the holy Catholic Church.

JOHANN. THESALONIC. cit. in Concil. Nic. 20. Act. 5. Concil. tom. vii. col. 353. ed. Paris. 1671.

¹ See the notes of Elmenhorst on Gennadius, cc. 11, 12.

² Chrysostom. In Gen. hom. 22, § 2. tom. iv. p. 195. ed. Ben.

³ Ἀσπματοι δ' ὅμως ἰσμεν τῶν ἀγγέλων τὴν φύσιν. σχηματίζουσι δὲ τὰς εἰδὲς πρὸς τὸ χρῆσθαι τῶν ὁρατῶν. THEODORET. In Dan. xii. 7. tom. ii. p. 1298. ed. Schulze.

⁴ Ὅραται δὲ αὐτῶν οὐχ αἱ φύσεις ἀσπματος γὰρ αὐταί . . . οὐ πολυμορφοὶ δὲ, ἀλλ' ἀσπματος αἱ νοηταὶ φύσεις, πρὸς δὲ τὸ χρῆσθαι ὁ τούτων δεσποτὴς σχηματίζει τὰς εἰδούς. In Zech. c. i. ver. 8—11. tom. ii. pp. 1697, 8. See also his Quæst. in Gen. q. 47. tom. i. p. 58.

⁵ Τῶν τῆς ἀσπματος μνησθέντων φύσιν. GREG. NYSS. De vita Moysis. tom. i. p. 195. ed. 1615.

⁶ Ἀσπματος τὸ καὶ κῆδος ἐν. In De pauper. amand. ib. p. 684.

⁷ Cum adhuc tenebræ ipsam aquam occultarent, et aquam terra absconderet, facti sunt angeli et omnes caelestes virtutes. GENNAD. De eccles. dogm. c. 10. Int. op. Augustini, tom. 8. App. col. 77.

⁸ See p. 184 above.

⁹ See the notes of Elmenhorst on Gennad. c. 10.

¹⁰ See § 7. below.

We have thus considered the writings of the Fathers in all the three points of view under which their authors appear; viz., as private teachers, as witnesses of what they professed to derive by successional delivery from the Apostles, and as witnesses of what they claimed to be considered the belief of "the church;" and we have found that, in all these characters, they oppose and contradict one another on various important points; and therefore that no such consent existed in the nominal primitive church as our opponents suppose.

Lastly, it must be added, that neither did the determinations of the Fathers, when assembled together in Councils, even the largest and most general which the church has ever seen, agree together.

For the proof of this, we have not far to seek. In less than twenty-five years after the meeting of the first Council which had any *pretension* to be called a General Council—namely, the first Nicene,—the orthodox creed there established, was contradicted (as we have already observed) by a far more numerous assembly of bishops, which met for the Western Church at Ariminum, and for the Eastern at Seleucia; and of which Bishop Stillingfleet says, "The Council of Ariminum, together with that of Seleucia, which sat at the same time, *make up the most General Council we read of in Church History*. For Bellarmine owns that there were six hundred bishops in the Western part of it. So that there were many more bishops assembled, than were in the Council of Nice; there was no exception against the summons, or the bishops present."¹

And this discrepancy between the two is (as we have already observed) noticed and admitted by Augustine, as rendering it useless to refer to either as an authority in the point in dispute.

To speak of the motives which actuated, or the influence brought to bear upon, one or the other of these assemblies as accounting for their determination, is quite beside the mark; or rather is an additional proof how little such assemblies can be relied upon.

Again, another proof of this is afforded us, in the contradictory determinations of the Second Council of Ephesus in 449 and the Council of Chalcedon (called the fourth General Council) in 451. It is a well-known fact, that the great question upon which both these Councils were assembled, that relating to the Eutychian error respecting the person of Christ, was determined by them in a precisely opposite manner; and the leading advocate of each opinion punished and sent into exile by these Councils

¹ Vindication of the Answer to some late Papers. pp. 63, 4.

respectively; Flavianus by that of Ephesus, Dioscorus by that of Chalcedon.

Nor can the force of this example be taken off by the plea which has been urged by *some* of the Romanists, that the latter was a General Council, but the former not so. For this is not the case, as has been already shown by Bishops Jewell¹ and Stillingfleet² (our opponents' own witnesses).

It was summoned as the other œcumenical Councils were, and in all respects as to the presence of patriarchs, and the number of bishops, and such matters, had as good a right to be considered a General Council, as almost any of those that are so called.

This Council is cited by Bishop Jewell as a proof that General Councils may err; and he remarks to his Romish adversary, "Where ye say, ye could never yet find the error of one General Council, I throw this escaped you for default of memory. Albertus Pigghius, the greatest learned man of your side, hath found out such errors to our hands, namely, in his book that he calleth *Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*. Speaking of the Second Council holden at Ephesus, which ye *cannot deny but it was general*, and yet took part with the heretic Abbot Eutyches against the godly man Flavianus, he writeth thus, *Concilia universalis etiam congregata legitime ut bene ita perperam injuste impieque judicare ac definire possunt*; that is, General Councils, yea even such as be lawfully summoned, as they may conclude things well, so may they likewise judge and determine things rashly, unjustly, and wickedly."

And when his adversary accused Pigghius of error in this, and denied that it was a General Council, he replies,—“Theodosius the emperor that summoned the bishops together, as may appear by his words, took it to be general. For thus he writeth to the Council; *Cogitantes non esse tutum absque vestra sancta Synodo et ubique sanctarum Ecclesiarum præsulibus, hujusmodi quæstionem de fide renovari necessarium duximus vestram sanctitatem convenire*. These words, *Sanctarum Ecclesiarum quæ ubique sunt*, import a generality of all churches through the world. Further, there was the Emperor's authority, the Bishop of Rome's Legate, which, as some men think, maketh up all together; and other bishops of all nations. And how could such a Council not be general?” And having shown that both Eutyches and Dioscorus spoke of this as a *General* [*universalis*] Council, he adds,—“But if perhaps ye doubt of these words, because the one was Eutyches, the other was Dioscorus, by whom they were spoken, (howbeit notwithstanding they were heretics,

¹ See his Letters to Dr. Cole in his Works, pp. 34, 5.

² Vindication of Answer to Papers, p. 54.

yet could they not lightly make an open lie in a matter that was so evident,) then read ye the old father Liberatus, that was *Archidiaconus Carthaginensis*, and lived under Vigilius, Bishop of Rome, at the least a thousand years ago, and writeth the very story of this Council: his words be these, *Fuit Ephesi generale concilium ad quod convenerunt Flavianus et Eutyches tanquam judicandi*. There is appointed, saith he, at Ephesus a General Council, in the which Flavianus and Eutyches made their appearance as men standing to be judged."¹

This extract from Bishop Jewell, may, I hope, serve not only to show that what are called General Councils are no final and binding authority in themselves, but that such also was the opinion of our Reformers; and thus abate the pretensions of some among us, who seem desirous of identifying their *reception* of what are called the first four General Councils, with an acknowledgment of an *intrinsic* binding authority in them over the consciences of men.

What, then, is the ground upon which this Council is denied the title of General? Because of its violence, forsooth. A sufficiently disgraceful charge, certainly, against an assembly of Christian bishops met together for the promotion of the faith of Christ. But is it possible that any one who acknowledges the first Euphesine Council to be a General Council, can deny that appellation to the second, because of its violence? Never, perhaps, was there exhibited in the church a worse specimen of indecent haste, party spirit, tumult and violence, than in the first council at Ephesus, called the third General Council, where the party attached to Cyril had not even the decency to wait till the arrival of the Eastern bishops. No one can read the account of its proceedings without feeling that the truth owes nothing to it, but the disgrace of having been so supported. And yet this assembly, because its determination happened to be in favour of orthodoxy, is to be dignified as holy, and venerable, and sacred, and *œcumenical*, (to which last title, by the way, it could have had no pretensions, whatever its conduct had been,) while another called in the same way, and precisely of the same kind, is to be dismissed at once, on account of a similar spirit having been displayed in it, as a paltry Synod that met in a corner of which no account is to be made. Some men seem to think that they can change the nature of things, by imposing certain *names* on them; and the truth is, that with the majority of men who will not give themselves the trouble to think and examine, especially in religion, *names* are often taken in the place of *realities*; and

¹ Letter to Dr. Cole in Works, pp. 34, 5.

to this the Romanists and our opponents owe nine-tenths of the success they have met with.

To the above instances of the variety of sentiment that prevailed in the antient church even on the most important points, it would be easy to add, but the task is a melancholy and ungrateful one. I have produced amply sufficient proof that the notion of our opponents, that there is to be found in the writings of the early Fathers a consentient delivery of the faith, derived from the oral teaching of the Apostles, fuller than what is clearly and plainly delivered in the Scriptures, is a dream which a very little acquaintance with the writings of the Fathers will at once put an end to. My object, therefore, is answered. "For" (to use the words of one of our opponents' best and most learned witnesses, Bishop Jeremy Taylor) "if I should inquire into the particular probations of this article [i. e. "the inconsistencies of the Fathers"] I must do to them as I should be forced to do now, if any man should say that the writings of the schoolmen were excellent argument and authority to determine men's persuasions. I must consider their writings, and observe their defaultances, their contradictions, the weakness of their arguments, the misallegations of Scripture, their inconsequent deductions; their false opinions, and all the weaknesses of humanity, and the failings of their persons, which no good man is willing to do, *unless he be compelled to it by a pretence that they are infallible*, or that they are followed by men even into errors or impiety. And, therefore, since there is enough in the former instances to cure any such mispersuasion and prejudice, I will instance in the innumerable particularities that might persuade us to keep our liberty entire, or to use it discreetly. For it is not to be denied, but that great advantages are to be made by their writings, and *probabile est quod omnibus, quod pluribus, quod sapientibus videtur*; if one wise man says a thing, it is an argument to me to believe it in its degree of probation; that is, proportionable to such an assent as the authority of a wise man can produce, and when there is nothing against it that is greater; and so in proportion, higher and higher, as more wise men, such as the old doctors were, do affirm it. But that which I complain of is, that we look upon wise men that lived long ago with so much veneration and mistake, that we reverence them, not for having been wise men, but that they lived long since."¹

To these direct proofs, that there is no such consent as our opponents suppose in the writings of the early Fathers, we may add very strong collateral evidence.

¹ Lib. of proph. Sect. viii. § 3.

We have this first in the statements of some of the best authors, both among the Protestants and the Romanists, to this effect. Thus, for instance, Gregory de Valentia says,—“It must be confessed that it can rarely happen that we can sufficiently know what was the opinion of all the doctors.”¹ Bellarmine is forced constantly to acknowledge their disagreement on important points.² Huetius and Petavius, two of the most learned of the moderns in such matters, so far from dreaming of such consent, accuse many of the Fathers of error on the most important points. And our own Dr. Cave agrees with them herein, as we have already seen. Our learned Bishop White, in his Answer to the Jesuit Fisher, says,—“Whereas the Jesuit compareth unanimous tradition of the sense of Scripture with the written letter and text of the Scripture, unless he equivocate in the name, terming that tradition which is collected from the Scripture, such uniform tradition as he boasteth of is very rare, for it must be such as in all ages, and in all orthodoxal churches, hath been the same. Now *the most undoubted and uniform tradition of all other*, is concerning the number and integrity of the books of Holy Scripture, and yet *in this difference hath been* between one church and another. (Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. ii. c. 23. and lib. iii. c. 3. and 22.)”³ And so still more clearly speaks the able prelate recently quoted, whom our opponents, drawn by his great name, would fain persuade us is on their side of the question, I mean Bishop Jeremy Taylor. “Since nothing,” he says, “can require our supreme assent but that which is truly catholic and apostolic, and to such a tradition is required, as Irenæus says, the consent of all those churches which the Apostles planted, and where they did preside, this topic will be of so little use in judging heresies, that (besides what is deposited in Scripture) it cannot be proved in anything but in the canon of Scripture itself; and, as it is now received, even in that there is some variety.” . . . “There is scarce anything but what is written in Scripture that can, with any confidence of argument, pretend to derive from the Apostles, except rituals and manners of ministration; but no doctrines or speculative mysteries are so transmitted to us by so clear a current, that we may see a visible channel, and trace it to the primitive fountains.” “Either for the difficulty of their being proved, the incompetency of the testimony that transmits them, or the indifferency of the thing transmitted, all traditions, both ritual and doctrinal, are disabled from determining our consciences

¹ Fatendum est raro accidere posse, ut quæ sit doctorum omnium &c. de religione sententia satis cognoscatur. Greg. Val. tom. iii. d. Trad. p. 377. As quoted by Bp. White, in his Answer to the Jesuit, p. 121.

² See his work De Controversiis, *passim*.

³ Bp. White's Reply to the Jesuit Fisher, pp. 124, 5.

either to a necessary believing or obeying.”¹ And speaking of the “inconsistencies of the Fathers,” having shown, in the case of Augustine, that there could be no innate authority in the writings even of such a Father, he adds, “*The same I say of any company of them*; I say not so of all of them; it is to no purpose to say it, for THERE IS NO QUESTION THIS DAY IN CONTESTATION IN THE EXPLICATION OF WHICH ALL THE OLD WRITERS DID CONSENT. In the assignation of the canon of Scripture they never did consent for six hundred years together; and then by that time the bishops had agreed indifferently well, and but indifferently, upon that, they fell out in twenty more; and except it be in the Apostles’ creed and articles of such nature, there is nothing which may, *with any colour*, be called a consent, much less tradition universal.”² And as to Mr. Keble’s notion, that Bishop Taylor afterwards changed his mind on this matter, I shall show hereafter,³ from the very last work he wrote, that there is not the slightest foundation for the idea.

It would be easy to multiply such statements; and as it respects the Anglican divines, many similar ones will be found in a subsequent chapter.

We have similar evidence, secondly, in the way in which the Fathers are quoted by all sides and all parties as, more or less, some or other, favourable to their views.

Thus at the second Nicene Council image-worship was defended on the authority of the Fathers; and all the errors of the Romish Church itself have, if you will believe the Romanists, the argument from antiquity altogether with them. On the other hand, the Protestants are universally agreed that the weight of patristical testimony is altogether against those errors. And the Eastern Churches are equally persuaded that the Fathers are on their side.

Again, among Protestants themselves, all the great parties have, over and over again, claimed antiquity as on their side. All the different views entertained by them, on the doctrines of the sacraments, justification, &c. have been supported by the testimony of Fathers. And zealots on all sides have been found to apply even the “everybody always everywhere agreed with me” argument. And still further it is a notorious fact, that most of the most learned modern Arians have urged more or less patristical testimony as in their favour.

Now I admit that this is not a sufficient *proof* that there is not a consentient testimony in the writings of all the Fathers on these points. But the question is, whether there is not *some*

¹ Bp. TAYLOR’s *Liberty of prophesying*, Section v. § 5.

² *Ib.* Section viii. § 3.

³ See ch. 11 below.

ground for their being so quoted, whether the admission made by almost all those best qualified to judge on such a point, that their writings abound with hasty and incorrect statements, does not at once show that such consent cannot be *proved*, and therefore cannot be a final standard of appeal, or judge of controversies; and that our opponents' plan for ending controversies by appealing to the Fathers is perfectly nugatory and chimerical.

And this argument gathers tenfold force, when we find that many of the most learned and able patristical scholars have openly confessed that many of the Fathers are *against* them in some of the most important points. For here we have something more than a mere reference to the Fathers for opposite doctrines, we have an admission to reason upon, made contrary to the prejudices of him who made it.

Moreover, as an *argumentum ad hominem* it is unanswerable. For our opponents charge Scripture with being obscure and unable to be a rule of faith and judge of controversies because it is quoted on opposite sides. If, then, this reasoning is correct, their appeal to the Fathers for the interpretation of Scripture and the decision of controversies is most absurd, for not only are they quoted on opposite sides, but it is allowed, by those best able to judge, that their writings abound with hasty and incorrect statements, and, by many of the most learned judges, that they disagree even on the most important points.

The mistakes to which we are liable when relying on such a foundation as a supposed consent of the Fathers are remarkably illustrated by some instances selected by our opponents themselves as instances of consent, and of course selected in the conviction that they were among those that would best stand the test of examination.

"How else," asks Mr. Keble, [i. e. how but by "catholic tradition,"] "could we *know* with tolerable *certainly* that Melchizedek's feast is a type of the blessed eucharist? or that the book of Canticles is an allegory representing the mystical union betwixt Christ and his Church? or that Wisdom in the book of Proverbs is a name of the Second Person in the Most Holy Trinity?" "All which interpretations," he adds, "the moment they are heard, approve themselves to an unprejudiced mind, and must in all likelihood have come spontaneously into many reader's thoughts. But it may be questioned whether we could ever have arrived at more than a plausible conjecture regarding them, but for *the constant agreement of the early Church*, taking notice every where in these and the like instances of the manner in which the Old Testament was divinely accommodated to the wonders of Christ's religion."¹

¹ Keble's Sermon, pp. 36, 7.

Here, then, is a specimen (I allude more particularly to the first and last of the examples mentioned) of what is the practical meaning of "catholic tradition," and the "constant agreement of the early Church." It is just the consent of some half a dozen Fathers falling in with the humour of the individual quoting them. I will not now stay to inquire whether the notion of Melchizedek's feast being a type of the eucharist approves itself the moment it is heard to an unprejudiced mind, though I must take leave to doubt it. But that it is delivered to us by the consent even of the Fathers that remain to us, is altogether a mistake. Mr. Keble's proof is as follows;—"For this see S. Cyprian, Ep. 63. p. 149. ed. Fell; S. Augustine, De Civ. Dei, xviii. 20. [? xvi. 22.] S. Jerome, Ep. ad Marcellam, t. i. p. 123. ed. Frob. Basil. These, with the distinct acknowledgment in the antient Roman Liturgy, may perhaps be considered sufficient to represent the sense of the Western Churches. Among the Greeks, S. Chrysostom, (on Gen. xiv.) clearly implies the same construction. But the reserve maintained by them on all liturgical subjects may account for their comparative silence on this point, even supposing them to have received the same interpretation." Such is the proof of "*catholic tradition*," and "*the constant agreement of the early Church*!"

Now it is quite true that Augustine and some other Fathers considered that the bread and wine were brought forth by Melchizedek in his sacerdotal character, and were a eucharistical sacrifice to God, but that this was held by the Fathers generally is a mistake not easy to be accounted for.

One of Mr. Keble's own most learned witnesses, Bishop Morton, will tell him that other Fathers held it to have been "an offering proceeding from the bounty and magnificence of Melchizedek, *for the refreshing of the soldiers of Abraham*, and not from an act belonging to the function of his priesthood by way of sacrifice unto God."¹ And though, perhaps, *all* the Bishop's references may not be correct, yet Epiphanius at least is clear in the matter. "He brought forth," says Epiphanius, "bread and wine for Abraham and those that were with him, *to entertain the patriarch* coming from [the slaughter of] the kings."² And hence, even some of the Romanists themselves (most of whom have adopted the other meaning in the hope of obtaining therefrom some support for their cause) have admitted that the latter is the true meaning. Thus Pagninus and Vatablus interpret the passage as meaning, that Melchizedek "re-

¹ Catholic Appeal, p. 166.

² Ἀρτον καὶ οἶνον . . . ἐβάλεν αὐτῷ τε καὶ τοῖς μετ' αὐτοῦ, ὡς ἀπὸ Βασιλεῶν ὑποδέχωντες τὸν ἐρχόμενον Πατριάρχην. Adv. hæret. LV. tom. i. p. 475.

freshed the weary and hungry army with royal liberality."¹ And Andradius says, "I am of their opinion who affirm that Melchizedek did refresh Abraham and his soldiers with bread and wine."²

Again, Mr. Keble's allegation that catholic consent and the constant agreement of the early Church assure us, "that Wisdom in the book of Proverbs is a name of the Second Person in the Most Holy Trinity," is equally unfounded. His proof is, "the disputes on the text, Prov. viii. 22. at the Nicene Council are sufficient to prove agreement on this point." A very small foundation surely for such a large superstructure as a claim to catholic consent.

Now let us hear what Epiphanius says on this matter. Having referred to this very text, he says, "And the Scripture has not at all any where confirmed this passage, nor has any one of the Apostles mentioned it, so as to apply it for a name of Christ. *So that consequently it does not at all speak concerning the Son of God.* . . . For the word itself [i. e. wisdom] does not at all compel me to apply it with reference to the Son of God. For he [Solomon] has not signified this, nor has any of the Apostles mentioned it, nor the Gospel either."³ And having proceeded to observe that some "*dared*"⁴ so to apply the passage, he adds, that it must not be considered as spoken of his divinity but only of his humanity,⁵ and that after all it was quite optional with us to suppose it to be spoken of Christ at all or not,⁶ and that though "*some orthodox Fathers*" had so interpreted the passage,⁷ and that it was "a sense consistent with piety, because some great Fathers had so understood it," yet that it was optional with all to receive this interpretation or not as they pleased.⁸

And the same was evidently the opinion of great St. Basil; for (when meeting the objections of Eunomius, derived from this passage,) having said that it was necessary to apply this passage

¹ *Lassum et famelicum exercitum regia liberalitate refecit.* As cited by Morton, Cath. App. p. 395.

² *Ego cum illis sentio, qui lassos Abraham milites et diuturna pugna fractos Melchizedechum pane et vino refecisse aiunt.* Def. Conc. Trid. lib. iv. fol. 371. b. as cited by Morton, Cath. App. p. 395.

³ Καὶ οὐ πάντες οὐκ ἀβέλους γραφὴ, οὐδὲ μνηστὴ τῆς τῶν Ἀποστόλων τῆς λέξεως ταύτης, ἵνα παραχρῆν αὐτῇ εἰς ὄνομα Χριστοῦ. ὥστε οὐκ οὐ πάντες πῶς τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ λέγει . . . Αυτό γὰρ τὸ ῥῆμα οὐ πάντως ἀναγκάζει με πῶς τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ λέγειν· ὡ γὰρ ἐδηλώσθαι, οὐδὲ τῆς τῶν Ἀποστόλων ἐμνημόνευσεν ἀλλ' ὥστε τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον. ΕΠΙΦΑΝ. adv. hæres. in h. 69. adv. Arian. §§ 20, 21. tom. i. pp. 743, 5.

⁴ Τολμῶσι τινες ἐπὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦτο φράζειν. Ib. p. 745.

⁵ Ib. p. 745.

⁶ Οὐδὲς ἡμᾶς ἀναγκάζει πάντως πῶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λέγειν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο. Ib. § 24. p. 748.

⁷ Τινες τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν καὶ οὐδοῦσαν ἀπεδοῦκαν τοῦτο ἐς τὴν ψαλμῶν παρουσίαν. Ib.

⁸ Μεγάλοι πατέρες τοῦτο ὡφελήσαντο. καὶ μὴ τι βούλησθαι τὴν οὐδοῦσαν καταθέσθαι, οὐ καταναγκάσθονται. Ib.

to the *human* nature, he adds,—“It is open also to any one to say that Solomon spoke these things concerning that wisdom which the Apostle mentions when he says, ‘When in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God.’”¹ And in his homily on Proverbs he has himself thus interpreted the passage.²

Now I do not deny, but on the contrary maintain, that very many, probably the majority, both of the ancient writers that remain to us, and also of the moderns, have affirmed that this passage in the book of Proverbs refers to Christ, but this only shows us the more how easily we may be deceived in inferring catholic consent from the testimony of a great number of writers.

Hence if we adopt the views of our opponents, we may call that one day an Apostolical tradition, and consequently a divine revelation, which we find the next, by happening to meet with some other remains of antiquity, to be nothing of the kind.

It is evident, then, that the notion that there is consentient testimony to the doctrines of revelation even among the authors that remain to us, is a mere dream of the imagination, and that even as it respects the very highest points of faith,

And the discrepancy we have thus shown to exist in their statements proves that we may have the consent of a number of Fathers to that which had not the consent of the Church in its favour, and consequently that with the scanty remains we possess of the writings of the ancient Church, it is impossible to infer the consent of the Church in any case, for though a doctrine may be supported by many of the Fathers whose writings remain to us, and not directly opposed in the other writings known to us, yet this may be merely accidental from our not happening to possess other works of the Fathers, or having the opportunity to know the sentiments of others in the primitive Church, of which, we must ever recollect, also, we have but a partial and limited representation in the writings of those who choose to become authors, and who were many of them probably far less fitted to give a sober and judicious account of the faith of the Church, than many others who have left nothing behind them. Hence we must observe, that even if some of the Fathers whose writings happen to remain to us agreed together in any particular point, and the rest were silent, which is the very utmost that the boasted “catholic consent” of our opponents could amount to, this would be wholly insufficient to assure us of such a consent of the whole

¹ Επειδὴ δ’ αὖ τις καὶ τοῦ Σολομῶντος περὶ τῆς σοφίας εἰρησὶν ἀρκεῖται ταῦτα ἢ καὶ ὁ Ἀποστόλος μνησθῆναι ἄρσεν· ἐπειδὴ γὰρ πρὶν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἔγινε ὁ κόσμος διὰ τῆς σοφίας τοῦ Θεοῦ. Adv. Eunom. lib. iv. tom. i. p. 293.

² Homil. in princip. Proverb. tom. ii. p. 99. See also Adv. Eunom. lib. ii. § 20. tom. i. p. 256.

primitive church in the matter as could be to us a sure record of the teaching of the Apostles, or be on any ground a divine informant or authoritative guide.

But in fact, though the theory put forward by our opponents is that "catholic consent" only can be relied upon, (a testimony, however, which by a voluntary self-deception they identify with the consentient witness of the few remains of the Fathers that *happen* to have come down to us) that which our opponents *practically* rely upon to prove this consent, is often the dictum of some half a dozen Fathers. In theory they hold it necessary to establish the *consent* of the Fathers, but their practice is totally different. And in truth, they must be well aware that otherwise they must give up their ground altogether, as both their favourite Vincent of Lerins, and Bellarmine, will bear reluctant witness. For notwithstanding the magnificent rule proposed by Vincent, that we should be guided in our search after truth by what "everybody always everywhere" in the catholic church testified respecting it, we find in the latter part of his treatise, that his practical proof of the doctrine held by "everybody always everywhere" may be derived from the testimony of less than a dozen authors. And Bellarmine candidly admits that of doctrine supported by the consentient testimony of all the Fathers, an "example is hardly to be found," (*vix invenitur exemplum*;) but he thinks that if a few Fathers of great name have supported it, and others when mentioning the subject have not contradicted it, that will do as well.¹ And thus our "divine informant," "catholic consent," is practically the *dictum* of a few fallible men.

This evident failure of the theory, when reduced to practice, is probably the reason why the Tractators are so shy of drawing out the *proofs* of "catholic consent" and traditive interpretations of Scripture delivered by the unanimous voice of the primitive church. Certainly their success in the cases upon which they have ventured, has not, as we have just seen, been such as is likely to encourage them to enter further into particulars than may be necessary. But one might suppose that maintaining, as they do, that antiquity unanimously consents in the delivery of a certain system of theology, they would be anxious to bring before the public the proofs of such consent; and beyond doubt they would advance their cause much more, in the eyes of all impartial men, by so doing, than by those general and vague appeals

¹ Videtur sufficere si aliquot Patres magni nominis expresse id asserant, et ceteri non contradicant cum tamen ejus rei meminerint. BELLARM. De V. D. lib. iv. c. 9.

and claims, accompanied with but few definite references, with which they usually content themselves.

Instead of flourishing high-sounding words against us about the infallibility of "the catholic church," and the certainty of what "everybody always everywhere" has believed, let them set themselves to *produce the passages* in which such tradition of doctrine or traditive interpretation of Scripture is delivered, and thus show its reception by "everybody always everywhere." In this they might afford us some proof of that patristical learning for which they take credit; and of which they certainly have not yet favoured the public with any very abundant testimony. And to show them that we have no wish to be hard upon them, we will offer them a doctrine upon which to try their powers in such a research, which they have themselves very prominently put forward as derived from "tradition;" viz., the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father. Will any one of our opponents give us a *Caten a Patrum* for this doctrine for the first few centuries, showing that during that period not only did no Father speak somewhat inconsistently with such a doctrine, but, on the contrary, that *all* delivered that doctrine with one consent? Let us see the evidence traced and drawn out. And be it remembered that it is to be so *clear*, as to counterbalance the (alleged) obscurity of Scripture in this point. It is not clear, say our opponents, in Scripture: but only go to church-tradition, and you will find that all the Fathers have clearly, and unambiguously, and with one consent, delivered it. I beg to ask, then, for the proofs upon which this statement rests. I do this by no means denying that it has been *in my belief* a truth held by the *orthodox* part of the visible church from the beginning, because I hold it to be a fundamental truth revealed in Scripture, and that we can find a stream of testimony in its favour, running down to us from the beginning. But I ask for the proofs of this boasted *catholic consent* for it. Suppose the attempt made. Will they include all those who have belonged to the visible church? No, they will say, we must go to the Fathers of the Catholic Church only, and not think that the agreement of such heretics as those that opposed the doctrine, is necessary. So, then, in the first step, the truth of the doctrine to be established, is assumed. But suppose it granted that we are to go only to the Fathers of the catholic church. What evidence, I beg to ask, could we show that there was *catholic consent* for it in the first three centuries? Moreover, Arius appealed to tradition as in his own favour. And Athanasius, though he referred to the tradition of a few ancient authors as in favour of the doctrine, does not claim catholic consent from the beginning in its favour; a claim, indeed, which, had he made it, could not have been alone a sufficient

ground for faith to build upon; and as to Mr. Keble's notion that the Fathers at Nice affirmed that the doctrine there agreed upon had been taught in all their churches from the beginning, it has not the least particle of evidence to rest upon.

Or let them take the doctrine of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and show us the proofs of catholic consent in its favour, for the first three centuries; and they will find, if they attempt it, that both Basil and Jerome will laugh at them for their pains; the one telling them that the doctrine was passed over in silence and left unexplained, and that some were unorthodox respecting it; and the latter, that *many* through ignorance of the Scriptures, and Lactantius among the number, erred respecting it.¹

Again, then, I say to our opponents, you talk about catholic consent and traditive interpretations of Scripture received by "the catholic church" for the whole Christian faith, produce your proofs of such consent, deal no longer in vague generalities, but let us know how many and what points of doctrine can be thus proved, and present us with the proofs; and I will venture to say, that the *leanness* and *partiality* of the Catena,—where some ten or a dozen men will appear as the *uncommissioned* representatives of as many millions, and a few sentences (some probably ambiguous and equivocal) of fallible men, pretending to nothing more than to deliver what, to the best of their knowledge and belief, was the truth, will be delivered to us as an infallible interpretation of Scripture,—will be the best answer in itself to all the claims made for "tradition."

SECT. V.—CONSENT EVEN IN THE WRITINGS THAT REMAIN TO US, NOT TO BE EXPECTED.

From the extracts already given from the writings of the early Fathers, it is very evident that there was much division of sentiment among them, even upon the highest points of faith, and consequently some among them involved in very serious error. And I would ask, Are we to be surprised that such was the case, in a vast society consisting of an immense number of distinct and *independent* bodies, like the primitive church? It must ever be remembered that the church, as left by the Apostles, consisted of a great number of bishoprics, all independent of each other; and each bishop having no head or superior but the great Head of the Church, to whom alone he was responsible. Archbishops, Patri-

¹ See pp. 195, 6. above.

archs, and Popes were a creation of the church. There was no common earthly head, nor even any representative assembly, to act as a check upon the prejudices and fancies of men. Had there even been such checks, experience would hardly warrant us in expecting perfect unanimity in the teaching of such a number of men as the pastors of the church even then amounted to. For let me ask, Is there such consent, even among the teachers of any one single body of Christians at this day, however full and explicit their confession of faith may be? We have already seen that Mr. Newman confesses, nay, strongly urges, that it is not the case, even in our own church. Is it not, then, most unreasonable to assume that such must have been the case, in such a body as the primitive church?

For how was such unanimity to be obtained? True, in the first instance every church was, no doubt, sound in the essentials of the faith. But the cases of Galatia, of Sardis and Laodicea, prove how soon that orthodoxy might be exchanged for grievous error. And how, I would ask, were such cases dealt with? It is easy to say that all the other churches that were sound in the faith might convene a representative council and excommunicate those churches. But did they do so? Nay, was it possible for them to do so, until, by the favour of the Emperor, they were allowed to call together such an assembly? But such permission was not given, nor consequently any such Council assembled, for more than three centuries after the time of our Lord's incarnation. There were, no doubt, local assemblies of bishops; but these had no *pretence* for concluding the whole church by their decisions. They had weight proportionable to the character and conduct of the bishops of whom they were composed, and no more.

But our opponents reason as if the whole nominal and external church, consisting of all these various independent parts, had been from the beginning one united body, all whose members were amenable to some common tribunal, and were immediately separated from the body upon any defection from the pure orthodox faith; a notion which is very pretty and pleasing in theory, but utterly groundless.

Further, it is obvious that in those details of fundamental points which had not been particularly the subjects of discussion in the church, the early Fathers might easily express themselves so as to appear favourable to views which they did not entertain. For instance, it was easy for writers who preceded the Arian and Nestorian and similar controversies, even though orthodox, to have expressed themselves in language apparently favourable to those errors. These are slips "*quas aut incuria fudit,—aut humana parum cavit natura,*" and which on points not in the

immediate contemplation of the writer, are surely in the case of human authors by no means uncommon. And certainly they are not likely to have given, as a body, such statements as should serve for the refutation of errors not contemplated by them. And if from probability we come to fact, we find this to be the case.

Moreover, most of their writings are controversial, where in zealously refuting one error, men are very apt to use language easy of application in favour of some opposite error not in their minds at the time. And to this, in the infancy of the church, before the rise of almost all the great controversies that have agitated her, men would be peculiarly liable. Extracts, therefore, from such writings, upon points not in the contemplation of the author, are very unsatisfactory arguments. It would be easy to bring examples to show this; but the objection is so manifestly well-grounded, and the point has been already so well illustrated by Daille, that I need not here enlarge upon it.¹

I might add, and not without reason, as the author just referred to has shown,² that upon these occasions they were sometimes too apt to strive for victory rather than truth: but I have no wish to depend upon such arguments, and would rather hope that such cases were not of frequent occurrence, notwithstanding the ingenuous statements of Jerome.³

Add to this, that they spoke sometimes with an intentional obscurity, in order to veil their meaning from the uninitiated.⁴

Further, it is undeniable that their language is often of a highly coloured, exaggerated, and rhetorical kind, but little calculated to give a sober and correct view of Christian truth. They speak in the language they had learned in the schools of philosophy and rhetoric, suited rather to attract and dazzle the hearer, than to give him definite notions respecting the faith.⁵

Now all these facts render it most improbable that we should be able to obtain from them any clear and definite consentient testimony to the faith. Nay, as we have already seen, the statements of many of the Ante-Nicene Fathers are accused of direct error, by some of the great lights of the fourth and fifth centuries. And if I am asked, as Ruffinus seemed disposed to ask Jerome, "How it is that there are some errors in their books," I reply with Jerome, "If I shall answer that I know not the causes of those errors, I will not immediately set them down as heretics.

¹ See Daille, *On the use of the Fathers*, bk. i. c. 5. Engl. ed. pp. 94—7. *I refer to this work, not as agreeing in all its statements, but as one that contains much valuable matter on this subject.*

² *Ib.* bk. i. c. 6. Engl. ed. pp. 112—16.

³ *Ep. ad Pammach.* 48. (al. 50.) § 13. tom. i. col. 232. ed. Vallars. Venet.

⁴ Daille, bk. i. c. 5. pp. 83, 4., and c. 6. pp. 107—10.

⁵ See again Daille, bk. i. c. 5. pp. 86—9.

For it may be that either they simply erred, or wrote with another meaning, or their writings were gradually corrupted by unskilful copyists; or certainly before that that meridian dæmon, Arius, arose in Alexandria, they may have spoken some things innocently and incautiously, and that cannot escape the calumny of perverse men."¹ But then I beg to inquire, with our learned Bishop Stillingfleet, "How comes the testimony of erroneous or unwary writers to be the certain means of giving the sense of Scripture?"²

To establish, also, such a consent as our opponents speak of, namely, such as can *practically* end controversies, we need peculiar clearness and accuracy of expression, such as can fix the meaning of the passage even in the view of those who would be glad to interpret it otherwise. And to claim consent in favour of what we hold to be the orthodox view, while at the same time we are compelled to admit that the testimonies of some Fathers on the subject are of doubtful meaning, and those of others expressed so as to appear rather to favour the opposite view, is merely to expose ourselves to just ridicule. If the Fathers have used unguarded and incorrect language, as far as they have done so, so far it is absurd to claim their consent, or to go to them for a definite decision on any point in controversy.

It must be added, without any wish to depreciate the value of those remains of antiquity we possess, that it is more than probable that there were hundreds of bishops in the primitive church far better able to give us a correct view of the faith of the church, than some of those whose writings happen to have come down to us. A man may be very eloquent, who is not very correct in his theological statements, as all ages of the church have shown us. The learning of a converted philosopher may give him great weight and celebrity in his generation, but he is not generally the best teacher of the Christian faith.

Nay, is it within the bounds of probability, however high a view we take of the character of the early Christians, that the oral instructions of the Apostles should be perpetuated by the consentient testimony of such a body of fallible men as composed the nominal and external catholic church? Liable as some at least of those who were merely nominal Christians would be

¹ Quomodo, inquires, in libris eorum vitiosa nonnulla sunt? Si me causas vitiorum nescire respondero, non statim illos hæreticos judicabo. Fieri enim potest, ut vel simpliciter erraverint, vel alio sensu scripserint, vel a librariis imperitiis eorum paulatim scripta corrupta sint. Vel certe antequam in Alexandria quasi dæmonium meridianum Arius nasceretur, innocenter quædam et minus caute loquuti sunt, et quæ non possint perversorum hominum calumniam declinare. HIRZON. adv. Ruff. lib. ii. § 17. tom. ii. col. 508, 9.

² See p. 217 above.

to misunderstand and misreport, liable as *all* would be to use inadequate and uncertain language, and by a change of phraseology open the door to errors, which they might never contemplate, how is it possible that all these should consent in giving a definite and certain testimony for the true faith and that alone, and one moreover so definite as distinctly to exclude and negative all error?

Further, is it likely that the Apostles should have left with the church either interpretations of Scripture or statements of doctrine more suitable than Scripture to negative all the various heresies that might arise in the church? Yet in order to magnify the authority of the church as an infallible witness of the Christian faith in all controversies, she is supposed to be the depository of oral Apostolical teaching sufficiently definite and extensive to do this, and all her members are said to have ever consented in handing down this Apostolical tradition.

For instance, in the case of the Arian heresy, we maintain that Scripture bears a clear testimony against it, the direct and necessary inference from its teaching being that the Son is consubstantial with the Father. No, say our opponents, Scripture is not clear upon the point, but "tradition" tells us that the true doctrine is that the Son is *consubstantial* with the Father, and this express testimony is alone sufficient to end the controversy. The same for the Nestorian, Eutychian, Pelagian, and in fact all the other errors that ever arose in the church. So that the supposition is, that the Apostles not only published the true faith, as we find it delivered in the Scriptures, but also in their oral instructions added such a description of it as would suit, not merely as Scripture does for an inferential condemnation, but for an *express*, and *verbal*, and *direct* condemnation of every error that would arise. Nay more, not only that the Apostles did this, but that this teaching in all its fulness was perpetuated and handed down for centuries, ready to be applied as each error arose. Is this likely? True, our opponents attempt to prove that it was so *a posteriori*, namely, from the argument of the consent of all the churches, which, they say, is not to be accounted for but on such a supposition. With this argument we have already dealt, and shown that there is no such consent, but we wish here still further to point the attention of the reader to the extreme improbability of the hypothesis which this argument of our opponents calls into existence.

However much, then, we must regret the absence of such a consentient testimony in favour of the full orthodox faith, it is not a matter which, under the circumstances of the case, ought to occasion us any surprise. Rather is it a matter of astonishment that any one should expect to find it, and still more to assume it

without, and even against evidence. Its absence is no evidence that there has not been in all ages a church of Christ, a company of faithful people in the world. Nay, it is no evidence that there have not always been local communities of Christians publicly professing the true faith. While Origen was venting his errors at Alexandria, and for his learning and eloquence was followed and admired by vast numbers in his time, and his errors never publicly condemned, there may nevertheless have been, at the same period, and no doubt were, many churches that retained the true faith. And the same we may say in the case of others who remained, notwithstanding their errors, free from any public condemnation by any body of men calling itself the church. At a time when there were no General Councils of the church to adjudicate on such matters, the difficulties were great in the way of any public censure being issued by the whole church. And probably much depended upon the weight and influence of the individual among the neighbouring bishops. If he was sanctioned by them, that is, if the error had spread but a little, then where was the tribunal that ever did or could call him to account? True, it does seem surprising that no public censure should have been passed upon Origen's doctrines in his life-time by the sound portion of the church. But such is the fact, at least as far as appears from the documents that have come down to us.

And let me ask, Had the other churches passed any public censure upon the churches of Sardis and Laodicea when our Lord rebuked them by his Apostle? We know of nothing of the kind; nor is it likely. Nevertheless the errors of these uncommunicated members of the catholic church did not prevent there being other members sound in the faith. Nay, even in those local communities that were sound in the faith there might be those who propagated erroneous doctrines, and yet aided by circumstances escaped a public condemnation, as even Jezebel was suffered to teach and seduce others to error in the church of Thyatira. (Rev. ii. 20.)

The notion, then, that all the members of the nominal and external catholic church must have given a consentient testimony respecting the faith, is on the face of it most improbable. And if all the writers whose remains we possess had done so, it would only have shown how extremely *partial* a representation we have in them of the sentiments of the antient Christians.

In this want of consent, also, there is nothing at all to alarm the Christian, nothing to show that the promises of Christ have failed, nothing to show that there has not been in all ages a company of faithful people visible to the world as Christ's mystical body, nothing to obscure the light of divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures or the teaching of those more orthodox portions

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of Christ's followers that have shone as lights in the world, holding forth the word of truth, nothing in fact to disturb any, but one who wishes to erect upon earth an infallible tribunal to which the consciences of men are to bow in blind submission,

SECTION VI.—THE UNCERTAINTIES AND DIFFICULTIES WITH WHICH EVEN THAT SMALL AND PARTIAL CONSENT WHICH MAY SOMETIMES BE ATTAINABLE AND IS CALLED BY OUR OPPONENTS "CATHOLIC CONSENT," IS EMBARRASSED.

Let us now proceed to consider more particularly the value of that partial consent that may perhaps be in some cases attainable, and which is dignified by the Tractators with the name of "catholic consent."

And first, we must observe, that when they speak of such consent as necessarily showing that the truth of which it testifies had its origin with the Apostles, they seem to be making a hasty and unwarranted assumption. Even allowing such consent to be more general than we can prove it to be, still it by no means follows that it is due to Apostolical teaching. Supposing it to be *strictly universal*, then indeed we need not hesitate to admit such an inference. But as for any *proveable* consent, it might originate as easily in the imaginations of the natural mind as in Apostolical teaching. It needs no proof that any corruptions of the faith suited to the natural feelings and prejudices of the human mind would be likely at the very earliest period of the church to obtain extensive circulation, especially if they were supported by a few able and influential men. No man who knows any thing of history or human nature needs to be told how great the influence of even one able and zealous individual may be over a whole community, especially if his teaching falls in with the bias of human nature. Nor will any Christian deny, that in a vast body such as that which composed the nominal Christian Church, the tendency would be towards a corruption of the faith.

But a still greater difficulty with respect to any producible consent is, that in many cases the expressions used are uncertain and of doubtful meaning, and open to different and even opposite interpretations.

We have already noticed, in the last section, how little suited many of the writings of the Fathers are, from their loose and inaccurate and rhetorical phraseology, their obscurity, and other similar causes, to give a definitive sentence on controverted points; and especially in the case of controversies subsequent to their

times where the point in dispute was, as far as we know, never distinctly brought under their notice. And this will be found to render every attempt to show that they have borne a consentient testimony in favour of any particular view almost useless and nugatory. For passages of doubtful meaning will of course be interpreted according to the view of the reader. And hence, as we have already observed, the Fathers are quoted on all sides. Thus, for instance, Bishop Bull claims them for his doctrine of justification, as does Bishop Jebb,¹ while others claim them for the doctrine of the Reformers on this point.² Granted that these opposing references do not prove that the Fathers dissent from each other on the point, (though upon our opponents' principles they would seem to do so) is it not nevertheless undeniable that their loose, uncertain, and inaccurate expressions give just ground for such opposite references?

Moreover, almost all the great controversies that have agitated the church have been raised since the third century. The writers, therefore, that preceded the fourth century wrote without any eye to such controversies. Their notices therefore of such points are generally indirect and incidental. They no more give a verbally definitive sentence respecting them than Scripture. They cannot serve, then, for determining them, for we cannot reason inferentially from them as we can from Scripture, because no man holds their words to be inspired, or their indirect observations to be sufficiently to be depended upon for such a purpose. In human writings we meet with much that, if applied to a point not in the mind of the writer at the time, would convey a very false impression of his views respecting it. With the writings of the early Fathers, therefore, there is on almost every point this drawback, that it had either not been mooted in their times, or was not in their immediate contemplation when they wrote, and consequently that they may have expressed themselves differently to what they would have done had the point in question been immediately before them. With Scripture the case is different. That is perfect as indited by an Omniscient Being. From that we may safely reason inferentially, and there is no drawback to weaken the force of the inference.

Now much of this is admitted by the lovers of the Fathers, but then they seem to think that they may be permitted to decide upon the allowances to be made for it, and so by a little ingenuity contrive to bring even doubtful and indirect passages among their witnesses for catholic consent. And if we come to investigate what is put forth as the catholic consent of the Fathers in

¹ See Koble's "Catena," p. 114.

² See *Corpus confessionum*.

behalf of any doctrine, we shall generally find that it has been obtained by a process strongly resembling that for which the bed of Procrustes is famed. The compiler having a model of doctrine in his own mind, finds perhaps some statements that seem exactly to fit his standard, but for his "catholic consent" will encounter many that are not so well suited to it. Nevertheless, the haste of the author when he wrote, his ignorance of the controversies that were afterwards to arise, the circumstances of the times or of the treatise in which he is writing, will afford many excellent reasons why his statements should be either too long or too short. It is therefore a kindness to him, for which he would no doubt be grateful could he know of it, to pare down his statements if they are somewhat too large, or put them on the rack if they need a little stretching, to make them speak the language of perfect orthodoxy. And so by a little contrivance we get a *Catena*, that *to those who made it* is very convincing, but somehow or other generally fails in producing much effect upon opponents able and willing to investigate for themselves. And the argument from patristical testimony, in itself a valuable one, when thus pressed too far sometimes loses even its legitimate weight.

To the generality of readers, however, 'it must be admitted, such a mode of arguing often answers very well. And if we may judge what people are ready to believe when it suits their fancy from what writers have said on this subject, we need never be at a loss for the support of the primitive church. For if all other methods of obtaining it should fail, the Benedictine Editors of Hilary seem to me to have given us a sure recipe for it, in the following very ingenious remark when speaking on the doctrine of the millennium. Being of course anti-millennarians, and therefore desirous of finding some support in that age for their own view, they remark,—“Moreover, that our doctrine was already received in their age, is proved by the efforts of Irenæus and Tertullian to root it out of the minds of the faithful.”¹ Whatever the Fathers may say, then, we can thus get good support for the doctrine we wish to maintain. If the Fathers uphold it, well and good; if they oppose it, then their efforts to root it out of the minds of the faithful show that the faithful believed it, and so either way we get good testimony for it. A little ingenuity will do great things in this matter.

Moreover, it is admitted, that instead of having positive statements from all the Fathers to depend upon for our "catholic consent," we must always content ourselves with having from some of them the testimony of *silence*, because they have only written

¹ Immo fidem nostram jam suo suo receptam probat Irenæi atque Tertulliani labor ut eam ex animis fidelium extorqueant. Pref. ad Hilar. Pictav. p. 68.

on the particular points which were brought more immediately under their notice. But this surely is a strange demand to make upon us, that because six persons have given their testimony for a doctrine, and three are altogether silent about it, we are to be so sure that we have the consent of all the nine in the matter, that we are to make that consent the foundation for our belief that the doctrine is true.

Further, we must observe that in matters of church polity nothing would be more likely than that the Fathers should suppose and represent all that the Apostles had ordained, to be so absolutely essential to the being of a church, that that could be no church that wanted any thing of the kind, speaking only in contemplation of the times then present, and never dreaming of such a different state of things in the church as was to be found previous to the Reformation. It was very natural that, without any authority for the statement from the Apostles, they should so represent the matter. It would be the notion sure to be entertained, and one which probably for the time and circumstances contemplated was the correct view of the case, though with our experience and in our times they might have judged differently. We cannot therefore conclude that such a notion was necessarily derived from the Apostles. It is obvious that even ancient consent on such a point, if it could be proved, would not show derivation from the Apostles, because it is easily accounted for on other grounds. What Ignatius has said, for instance, on this subject in his Epistles, was said with reference to the circumstances of his day, and is not forthwith to be applied as a test by which the churches that were the offspring of the Reformation are to be tried. Granting fully that under ordinary circumstances the ordinances of the Apostles ought to be adhered to, it nevertheless does not follow that under extraordinary circumstances they are so necessary as to unchurch all who do not comply with them. For such a view of the case we want direct Apostolical authority, and are not to be bound by those patristical representations which might be very just and true for the time then present, but are not applicable to a completely altered state of things. In the absence of any direct Apostolical injunction, the Christian revelation must be looked at *as a whole*, and the preservation of its essentials, as delivered to us in the Scriptures, be our first and great concern, to which every thing else must give way.

Moreover, in some important points the Fathers changed their minds, holding different views on the subject at different periods of life.

We have a whole treatise of Augustine written at the close of his life, entitled his "Retractations," in which he corrects the

statements made in his former works. We find similar changes of sentiment in other Fathers, and passages in their works contradictory to each other. And hence an exception is often taken, and justly, to passages adduced on any controverted point, on the ground that they were written when the author's judgment was immature. And hence Vincentius himself requires that our judgment be formed from what the Fathers *persevered* in maintaining, and held to the end of their course.¹

To perfect our catholic consent, then, we ought to know whether the authors we quote persevered in the view maintained in the passages we refer to, and were of sufficiently ripe judgment when they wrote to make their testimony valid. But how we are to ascertain this it is difficult to understand. Few have been so ingenuous as Augustine to confess such change of views. And if they had, it is a mere matter of chance as to such confessions coming down to us. Jerome tells us² that such a letter was written by Origen to Fabianus, bishop of Rome, expressing his regret at having written such things as he had; but we know nothing of this letter, but from this incidental notice of it by Jerome.

And this variation of sentiment, by the way, as far as it exists, completely overthrows the idea of there being any traditional teaching pervading the whole church upon the point; for had there been, there would have been no room for such change of views. So that it not only shows us the difficulty of proving consent, but also that there was not such consent, and that the views held varied with the private opinions and judgment of individuals.

Again; to know the degree of value to be attached to even a consentient testimony of the Fathers in favour of any view, we ought also to know whether the point be a fundamental article; because otherwise we can have no security against even such a testimony being erroneous.

Now, how we can ascertain this, but for those points which are laid down in Scripture as fundamental, (and for which, therefore, we need not patristical testimony,) I know not; for it does not by any means follow, that because the Fathers were not likely to have all erred in fundamentals, therefore they could not be wrong in determining what points are fundamental. And if we were willing to admit their testimony on the point, we should be unable to get anything like a sufficient testimony from them; and at most the brief summaries of Irenæus and Tertullian

¹ *Perseveranter tenuisse, scripsisse, docuisse.* Commonit. § 3. (al. 4) et § 28. (al. 39.)

² Ipse Origenes in epistola quam scribit ad Fabianum Romanæ urbis episcopum penitentiam agit cur talia scripserit. Hieron. Ep. ad Pammach. et Ocean. ep. 84. (al. 65.) Tom. i. col. 531, 2. (Vell. Ven.)

would be all that could be established as fundamental, by such testimony.

Lastly, our opponents, to avoid the obligation of admitting anything they dislike, have themselves added to these another difficulty, and one which will be found altogether insuperable.

There are some points, it seems, to which the Fathers have borne what our opponents, upon their own principles, are obliged to recognize as a consentient testimony, but which, nevertheless, are not quite to their mind, (some specimens of which we shall give hereafter;) and accordingly they have been compelled to maintain that not only must we have catholic consent, but that catholic consent must be accompanied with the declaration that it is "traditionary teaching."

It is amusing, indeed, to see the straits to which our adversaries are reduced, when they come to the *practical* application of their principles to particular points. This may be remarkably seen in the Tract on Purgatory.¹ Speaking of Purgatory, they say,—“Now it can only be an article of faith, supposing it is held by antiquity, and that unanimously. For such things only are we allowed to maintain, as come to us from the Apostles; and that only (ordinarily speaking) has evidence of so originating, which is witnessed by *a number* of independent witnesses in the early church. We must have the unanimous ‘consent of doctors,’ as an assurance that the Apostles have spoken.” (p. 25.) Here, then, it is evident that what they mean by “the unanimous consent of Doctors,” is the consent of “a number.” But, being obliged afterwards to admit that *a number* of the best witnesses among the Fathers speak contrary to their views, they are driven to the necessity of making some further nice distinctions in the matter, and shifting their rule to one which it is still more impossible to apply. “What has been said,” observes the Tractator, “will illustrate what is meant by Catholic Tradition, and how it may be received, without binding us to accept everything which the Fathers say. It must be catholic, to be of authority; that is, all the writers who mention the subject, must agree together in their view of it, or the exceptions, if there be any, must be such as *probare regulam*. And again, *they must profess it is traditionary teaching*. For instance, supposing *all the Fathers agreed together in thier interpretation of a certain text*, I consider that agreement would invest that interpretation with such a degree of authority, as to make it at first sight most rash (to say the very least) to differ from them; yet it is conceivable that on some points, as the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy, they might be mistaken. It is abstractedly conceivable that a mo-

¹ Tracts for the Times, No. 79.

dern commentator might, on certain occasions, plausibly justify his dissent from them:—this is conceivable, I say, unless they were explaining a doctrine of the Creed, which is otherwise known to come from the Apostles,—or *professed* (WHICH WOULD BE EQUIVALENT) that such an interpretation had ever been received in their respective churches, as coming from the Apostles. Catholic tradition is something more than catholic teaching. Great as is the authority of the latter (and we cannot well put it too high) tradition is something beyond it. *This remark is in point here, for it MIGHT BE OBJECTED that so many Fathers agree together in the notion of a last-day Purgatory, that were it not for the accident of others speaking differently, we should certainly have received it as Catholic Tradition.* I answer, no; whatever the worth of so many witnesses would have been,—and it certainly for safety's sake ought to have been taken for very much,—still Origen, Hilary, Ambrose, and the rest, do not approximate in their remarks to the authoritative language in which they would speak of the Trinity, or the benefits of Baptism. *They do not profess to be delivering an article of the faith once delivered to the saints.*" (pp. 37, 8.)

Here, by their own hands, the very foundation of their system is all but overthrown. For if, as is here allowed, the unanimous consent of the Fathers that remain to us is not a sufficient proof that what is so delivered came from the Apostles, but it is required that they should also unanimously declare that what they were delivering did come from the Apostles by a successional delivery of it from one to another, then is the notion of ANY doctrine or interpretation of Scripture being so established, preposterous indeed. But this unanimous declaration must of course be, as in the former case, the declaration of "a number." And we have already given various instances in which this declaration was made by "a number;" and yet, in the judgment of "a number" both of antient and modern divines, our opponents included, was made without foundation.¹

¹ There are some remarks on this matter by an able writer in the British Magazine for February, 1840, who signs himself S. T. R., so judicious and pertinent to our present purpose, that I cannot but direct the attention of the reader to them. Speaking of the Tract above quoted, he says,—“The principles of the Oxford Tract Writers in this tract may lead to every corruption, they being unhappily opposed to the spirit of a Canon which I quoted in a previous letter. Whether they are harmless or not to their authors I do not know, but I feel sure that they are capable of being very dangerous when imbibed and acted upon by others. Upon that Canon Dr. Waterland observes, what cannot be too often repeated, that ‘it does not order that the clergy should teach whatsoever had been taught by Fathers; no; that would have been setting up a new rule of faith: neither does it say that they shall teach whatsoever the Fathers had collected from Scripture; no; that would have been making them infallible interpreters or infallible reasoners.’ And these observations, I submit, apply, *however numerous those Fathers*

In laying down these nice distinctions, I need hardly observe that our opponents are as usual following the guidance of their

may be. 'The doctrine must be *first* found in Scripture; only to be more secure that we have found it there, the Fathers are to be called in, to be, as it were, constant checks upon the presumption or wantonness of private interpretation. (vol. v. p. 317.) But the Oxford Tract writers in this Tract, lay down rules which do not require that the doctrine should be first collected out of the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments; they dispense with them; they rely upon WHAT THEY CALL THE CHURCH, WHICH IS PRACTICALLY CERTAIN WRITERS WHOM THEY MAY CHOOSE TO CALL THE CHURCH. They tell us, (p. 25.) that 'such things only,' (speaking of Articles of faith,) 'are we allowed to maintain as come to us from the Apostles; and that only, ordinarily speaking, has evidence of so originating which is witnessed by a number of independent witnesses in the early church. We must have the unanimous consent of doctors as an assurance that the Apostles have spoken.' This is their rule for selecting doctrine, and calling it Apostolical, in cases where the Holy Scriptures are silent. Let us examine it. The word 'unanimous' coupled with the 'early church' in the other sentence must I should think be intended to mean, not merely unanimous consent of a particular age, but of ages, especially some of the early ones, in order to give some appearance of a connexion with the Apostles; and if so, the word, 'unanimous,' must be construed liberally, and mean what is said in the former sentence, '*a number*.' But then if it be taken liberally, a question will arise, How many Fathers will make up this number, and on what principle are *they* to be selected? And also out of what centuries are they to be gathered? And these questions are not to be decided by merely *their opinion*; they must be so decided as to leave no proper fear that we can fall into error. We have a right to require this, as, on giving up the guidance of Holy Writ, we are promised, and ought to have, very clear and intelligible lines, the matter depending upon them being no less than *Apostolical doctrine*. But if the Oxford Tract writers cannot so answer the questions, not only is their rule worthless, but they are opening the door for the maintenance of any early opinion, however erroneous, (*since there are few that have not several patrons in the first four or five centuries*), which may suit the taste of the theologian. The Oxford Tract writers themselves felt this difficulty in respect of the doctrine of a judgment purgatory, since it might be said that that doctrine being witnessed by so many doctors must be believed, and yet it is *erroneous*; and therefore, in pp. 37, 38, they make a supplemental rule by distinguishing between what they call 'catholic teaching,' and 'catholic tradition;' and affirm, that not only must all the fathers 'who mention a doctrine agree in their view of it, or the exceptions, if there be any, must be such as *probare regulam*, but also they must profess it to be traditional teaching.' Now, without stopping to inquire what those unlucky exceptions may be, (unlucky as leaving matters still in uncertainty,) let us see the way in which they practically apply it to the overthrow of a judgment purgatory. They allow that the worth of so many Fathers would, for safety's sake, be very great, but that 'they do not approximate in their remarks to the authoritative language in which they would speak of the Trinity or the benefits of baptism. They do not profess to be delivering an article of the faith once delivered to the saints. Now, since the Fathers in general express their doctrines rather confidently, or at least make no such difference as would afford these 'clear and intelligible lines' which are promised, and which ought in a case of such importance to be given to us,—while such a distinction, if not most *clearly* marked, allows a very unfortunate license for abuse,—I suppose that the Oxford Tract writers mean that nothing is to be received as unwritten apostolical doctrine but what is declared in as many words to be traditional teaching by this '*number* of independent witnesses in the early church.' If so, here we have, apparently, a tangible rule, and if it be hastily read, as most books and tracts are now a days, it will pass very well; but a more close inspection will, I fear, show that however,

friends the Romanists. "Our adversaries require two things to make the testimony of the Fathers worthy to be relied on," says

or it may apply, being perhaps made for it, to the case of the judgment purgatory, it will not answer our purpose, the discovery of unwritten apostolical doctrine, unless we are also sure that whatever the individual fathers and the bishops of the catholic church tell us is traditional teaching, is in truth apostolical doctrine. Will the Oxford Tract writers affirm this? Perhaps they will. But will they prove it? Until that be done, we have no 'clear and intelligible lines.' Among the various doctrines, and many of them erroneous, like the judgment purgatory, which the fathers held, the touchstone of truth will still, practically, be the taste of the inquirer. Having lost the sure guidance of Holy Writ, he will adopt either what he likes or what he thinks right in all the wantonness or weakness of private judgment.

Having thus examined these rules, and seen, I think, how very insufficient they are for the discovery of unwritten apostolical doctrine, and how liable, on the other hand, they are to be abused to the maintenance of error, let us see how the Oxford Tract writers are able, when an erroneous doctrine is advanced against them, to meet it. How do they meet the Romanist, for instance, on this doctrine of purgatory? The Holy Scriptures,—those 'safe and substantial bulwarks'—not being required by them, not even their testimony through the light of early Christian writings, they have nothing wherewith to repel the Romanist but these two arguments: first, that the fathers adduced, though teaching more than themselves, do not teach purgatory; and secondly, that their testimony is contradictory. A Romanist, I think, would smile, and say to them, 'Gentlemen, you do not require the doctrine to be seen in the Scriptures, as your own is not there; neither do you require it to be seen in the fathers of the two first centuries, as your own is not there. Now in the third century we have all the 'independent witnesses' that exist in support of our doctrine. It may be true that each witness does not in all points fully exhibit it as it is now defined, yet all present some portion of it. And allow me to recal to your recollection your own opinion, that the more diffuse teaching of a later age may fairly be considered as the due development of the brief and sententious doctrinal declarations of an earlier period. I recal this with the greater pleasure, since it is so well supported by an instance of your own connected with our present subject. I allude to a passage referred to in the British Critic, No. 49, p. 73, from the Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesian, § 9. . . . This passage you very properly, as we Romanists consider, adduce as an apparent recognition by Ignatius, of the doctrine more fully developed in later times of the *Limbus Patrum*. Now, if this passage, which, it must be confessed, is somewhat indistinct, exhibiting at the most but a faint outline of one portion of the doctrine, and which the generality of protestants, not so free from prejudice as yourselves, would reject altogether as having nothing to do with it, I say, if a such passage, so indistinct and so defective, be admitted by you as apparently recognising and sanctioning the more full development of a later age, surely you cannot resist our evidence for the doctrine of purgatory? I must really insist that, as far as the three first centuries are concerned, (and if you wish it I will pursue the inquiry farther down,) all the writers who 'mention' the subject agree more or less in their view of it, each of them exhibiting some peculiar element of our doctrine; and that, consequently, this may fairly be considered as one of those admitted cases in which, in the silence of the apostolic writings, we have sufficient assurance that the apostles have spoken.' As a matter of course, as centuries roll on, and we have more writers, we have also more full and comprehensive views of the doctrine, which enable us, as in the case of the *Limbus Patrum*, more fully to exhibit it; but supported as these early and brief comments are by later and more fully developed ones, their evidence must, I beg leave to submit, on our common principles, be deemed conclusive. And with respect to your other objection, if it have any force at all, it will be fatal to

Placette ;¹ " first, that they consent, and secondly, that they do not merely propose what seems most true to themselves, but testify moreover that what they teach was either delivered by Christ, or is of faith, or which is all one, the opposite of it heresy. If either of these fail, then their testimony is not secure. The first condition is required by many, and particularly by Alphonsus a Castro, who, inquiring out the ways whereby a proposition may be convinced to be heretical, in the fourth place assigns 'the unanimous consent of all the Fathers who have written upon that argument.' The latter condition is made necessary by many more. Driedo tells us the authority of the Fathers is of no value 'any otherwise than as they demonstrate their opinion either from the canonical Scriptures or the belief of the universal church since the Apostles' times; and that they do not always deliver their sense as matters of faith, but by way of judgment, opinion, and probable reason,' " &c. "Both conditions are required by Canus and Bannes, who, laying down rules whereby true traditions may be discerned from false, both assign this in the second place and in the same words; 'If the Fathers have unanimously from the beginning all along the succession of their times held any article of faith, and refuted the contrary as heretical.' Bellarmine and Gretser give this for their fourth rule,— 'When all the doctors of the church teach anything by common consent to have descended from Apostolical tradition, either gathered together in a Council or each one apart in their writings' Martinonius, that 'none of the holy Fathers or doctors taken separately is the rule of faith, nor all yet together conjunctly, unless they assert their common opinion to be of faith, and not merely propose their own judgment.' Lastly, Natalis Alexander affirms, that 'when all the Fathers conspire in the same opinion, defend it, and propose it as Apostolic doctrine, and an article of the church to be believed by catholic faith, then doth their authority afford a necessary argument of sacred doctrine.' " "It sufficeth not therefore," observes Placette, "either that many Fathers

your own doctrine also; except that in your case you have, I believe, the unanimity of silence. But should your doctrine have any existence, it cannot be with the 'unanimous consent' of doctors. Doctors in every age from the third are opposed to you; while in our case, from the third century to the present day, we can show you an uninterrupted descent—the stream of our doctrine flowing more full and clear in every succeeding age.' I know not how the Oxford Tract writers would meet such observations as these; but I fear that the Anglican believer, if he yields to the principle of this tract, instead of 'expatiating in the rich pastures of catholicism,' will soon find himself in 'the snare of popery.' " Brit. Mag. for Feb. 1840. pp. 174—7.

¹ In his "Incredible Scepticism of the Church of Rome," translated and published by *Archbishop Tenison*, 1688, 4to., and inserted by Bishop Gibson in the third volume of his *Preservative against Popery*.

deliver an opinion as of faith, or that all should simply teach it, but not affirm it to be of faith. *Now if these two conditions be observed, how few articles of Christian faith shall we receive from tradition? For the Fathers seldom all agree and more rarely admonish us that what they teach is of faith.* So THAT IF YOU TAKE AWAY ALL ARTICLES WHEREIN EITHER OF THESE CONDITIONS IS WANTING, IT MAY WELL BE DOUBTED WHETHER ANY ONE WILL REMAIN *From what hath been said, it appears that matters of tradition and belief cannot be learned from the Fathers.* Hence Ægidius Estrix vehemently inveighs against Peter van Buscum, a Divine of Gaunt, who in his 'Instruction' had remitted young divines to the Fathers to learn the Christian doctrine from them. And Nustus the Jesuit likens those writers of controversy, who, passing by the Scripture, betake themselves to the Fathers, to thieves and rogues, who deserting the cities flee into thick woods that they may more securely hide themselves."¹

In fact, our opponents when brought to the point are compelled to admit the uncertainty of their boasted "catholic consent." "We, for our parts," says Mr. Newman, speaking on this subject, "have been taught to consider that faith in its degree as well as conduct must be guided by probabilities, and that *doubt is ever our portion in this life* . . . we are but *striking a balance* between difficulties existing on both sides."² And therefore they have very little difficulty when "*striking the balance*" to make it *pro* or *con* in any particular case according to their own taste and convenience. And the refuge which they have provided for themselves against an objector is twofold, first that if this "consent" be not admitted, notwithstanding its uncertainty, as a sufficient foundation for faith to rest upon, we shall be left without any ground for believing the Scriptures to be the word of God, a statement for which the sceptics of the day will no doubt feel greatly obliged to them; and secondly (to make all right) that faith means belief upon imperfect and uncertain evidence; both which propositions we shall consider in the next chapter, but we notice them here that the reader may know how far our opponents themselves have been driven towards the admission of the doctrine for which we have been contending in this chapter.

So far, then, from shrinking from such a charge as that which Placette brings against the church of Rome for patronizing such doctrines, namely, that of "incurable scepticism," Mr. Newman at once avows that such is his state of mind, and that he is so fully conscious of the insufficiency of the grounds upon which his faith rests, that he feels that "*doubt is ever his portion in this*

¹ Incur. Scept. of Church of Rome, c. 3.

² Lect. p. 129. See also pp. 69 and 389.

life." The reader will do well to consider whether he is desirous that such should be *his own portion*, and if not, to take heed how he embraces sentiments which, by the confession of their authors, will lead him to it.

SECT. VII.—THE RIVAL APPEALS MADE TO PATRISTICAL TRADITION IN ANTIEN T TIMES ON SEVERAL OF THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS, GROUNDED UPON TESTIMONIES, MANY OF WHICH WE DO NOT NOW POSSESS, MUCH REDUCE THE VALUE OF ANY PARTIAL CONSENT WE MAY FIND ON SUCH POINTS IN THE WORKS THAT REMAIN TO US.

WE must now proceed to observe that the claim made to catholic consent in favour of the orthodox faith is opposed by the rival claims of antient heretics to a portion at least of patristical tradition in their favour. And as they possessed the writings of the Fathers to a far greater extent and in a far more correct state than we now do, it is impossible for us precisely to determine what grounds they may or may not have had for such an appeal.

And in noticing this point, I must caution the reader against the misrepresentations that are so common on this subject. Many seem to take it for granted that those who did not receive the orthodox doctrine are to be set down as men who had not common honesty, and uttered falsehoods without hesitation; which, however true it may be of some, is not to be assumed of all of them. Moreover, the Romanists, to answer their own purposes, almost always represent the heretics as men who *admitted* that their views were new and that they could plead no sanction for them in antiquity, and who appealed only to Scripture; and our opponents (somewhat strangely for men who profess so much knowledge of antiquity) evidently proceed upon the same notion, either from having fallen into the Romish snare, or from having been misled by their great master, the monk of Lerins, who misrepresents this matter as much as the Romanists. For he universally represents the heretics as appealing only to Scripture, and bringing forward what they knew and confessed to be new doctrines, repudiating any appeal to antiquity, and yet with an inconsistency not uncommon in such writers, tells us with respect to some of those heretics, that they "commonly lay hold of some rather darkly expressed writings of one antient Father or other, which by reason of the obscurity may seem as it were to make for their opinion, to the end they may be thought, whatsoever, I know not what, they bring forth to the world, *neither to have*

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been the first that so taught, neither alone of that opinion." (§ 7.) and accuses them (not without reason probably as it respected many) of corrupting the writings of the Fathers, (§ 28,) forgetting that if they repudiated any appeal to antiquity, they would not have given themselves the trouble to do this; and with respect to Nestorius, he pens the following *downright misstatement*; that he "*boasted that he was the first and only man who understood the Scriptures, and that all others were in ignorance, which before his days, in their office of teachers, had expounded the divine sayings, that is, all priests, all confessors and martyrs, of whom some had expounded God's law, others allowed and believed them so expounding*: to conclude, he maintained that *the whole church both now doth err, and always had erred, because as he thought she had followed and was following ignorant and erroneous doctors.*" (§ 32.) Now it is notorious that Nestorius and his followers have always maintained that their doctrine had been handed down from the earliest times of the Christian church. It is painful to see such statements made in defence of the truth. And it is not the only one of this kind which Vincentius has made. A statement of the same kind and even much more incorrect is made by him with respect to Agrippinus on the question of the rebaptization of heretics,¹ as we have already seen.

On this head, then, we remark, in the first place, that the appeal of the early heretics was very frequently made not to Scripture, but to their own corruptions of Scripture, or to Scripture mutilated to serve their purposes.

Thus Marcion mutilated the gospel of Luke, and removed from St. Paul's Epistles all those things that were contrary to his views, and rejected some whole books.²

And Tertullian, speaking of these corruptions of Scripture as common among the heretics, says—"They who purposed teaching a different doctrine were *compelled by necessity* to make alterations in the documents that deliver the doctrine. For they could not otherwise have taught a different doctrine unless they had different documents to teach with. As their corruption of doctrine could not have succeeded without a corruption of the documents that deliver the Christian faith, so our integrity of doctrine would not have belonged to us but for the integrity of the documents by which the doctrine is expressed."³

So the author of "The Little Labyrinth," (sometimes attribu-

¹ See c. 9.

² Iren. Adv. hær. lib. i. c. 27. ed. Mass. c. 29. ed. Grab. and lib. iii. c. 12. Tertull. Adv. Marc. lib. iv. and v. Epiphani. in hær. Marconit.

³ Tertull. De Præsc. c. 38. See the original under Tertullian in c. 10. below.

ted to Caius,) speaking of those that followed the heresy of Artemon, (who denied the divinity of our Saviour,) says,—“They have fearlessly adulterated the Scriptures, and have rejected the canon of the antient faith, and have ignored Christ; *not inquiring what the Divine Scriptures say*, [showing what he thought they ought to have done] but labouring diligently to find out what kind of syllogism might be discovered for the confirmation of their impiety. . . . They have fearlessly laid their hands upon the divine Scriptures, saying that they have amended them.” And he goes on to say, that any one who will inspect their copies will at once see the proof of this from the way in which they differed one from another, and because they could not point out the copies from which any one of theirs was taken; adding that some of them had gone so far as to reject the whole of the Law and the Prophets.¹

So Clement of Alexandria accuses the heretics of refusing to admit some portions of Scripture which went against them, and blamed them not because they reasoned from Scripture, but because they caught at words that might appear favourable instead of looking to the general sense of the passage, and reasoned from a few isolated passages instead of taking a general and connected view of what Scripture delivered on the subject;² a fault which, as Tertullian tells us, was common to all the heretics.³

Other instances may easily be found. I will add only one more, viz., the case of the Manichees, who charged the Scriptures with having been corrupted subsequently to the times of the Apostles,⁴ and rejected all the passages that were opposed to their heresy.⁵ And they who look further into the matter, will find that in the appeals of heretics to Scripture, there was generally some slippery dealing with Scripture of this kind.

Nay, they were many of them noted for deterring men from the study of the Scriptures.

For Eutherius, after an emphatic exhortation to men to search for the truth in the Scriptures, which we shall notice elsewhere, lays it down, as one mark of heretics, that they are glad to keep men from the Scriptures;—“they who desire,” he says, “to be judges in their own cause, drive men from the Scriptures, under the pretext, indeed, of not daring to penetrate into their mysteries

¹ Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 28. Routh, Reliq. Sacr. vol. ii. pp. 10—12.

² Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vii. p. 891. ed. Potter.

³ His tribus capitulis totum instrumentum utriusque Testamenti volunt cedere, cum oporteat secundum plura intelligi pauciora; sed proprium hoc est omnium hæreticorum. Tertull. Adv. Prax. c. 20. p. 511. ed. 1664.

⁴ See August. De util. cred. c. 3. tom. 8. col. 49.

⁵ See August. Contr. Faust. libr. xi. c. 2, tom. 8. col. 218. and hæc. 46.

as inaccessible; but, in truth, in order to avoid their condemnation of their own false doctrine."¹

And so Tertullian calls them "men that fly from the light of the Scriptures."²

And Basil brings this as an especial charge against the *Arians*, that it was "always their great care not to teach simple souls from the divine Scriptures, but to circumvent the truth by human philosophy."³

But further; and this is what I am here more particularly concerned to show; they were *in the habit of appealing to patristical tradition as in their favour*.

Thus Irenæus tells us of the heretics of his time, "when they are reproved from the Scriptures they immediately begin to accuse the Scriptures themselves; as if they were not correct, nor of authority, and that they are not consistent; and *that the truth cannot be found out from them, by those who are ignorant of tradition*."⁴ So far, then, from being opposed to tradition, it seems that they were as great sticklers for it, as our opponents; and accordingly we find Irenæus, *in order to refute them upon their own ground*, proceeding to show them that tradition was against them, as well as Scripture; for which he has been himself set down by the Romanists, and our opponents, as one of the great champions for the necessity of tradition; with what truth we shall see more fully hereafter.

And so, elsewhere, he tells us of the Marcosians⁵ and Carpocratians⁶ in particular, that they pretended a tradition in favour of their notions.

And Clement of Alexandria informs us that Valentinus, Marcion, and Basilides, all professed to preach what was delivered by Matthias;⁷ and that the followers of Basilides boasted that their master was a pupil of Glaucias, the amanumensis of Peter; and those of Valentinus, that their master was taught by Theodas, a friend of Paul.⁸

¹ 'Οι βουλομένοι τα ἑαυτῶν κατὰ ἀποκρίσεις τῆς γράφης, προφασί μὴ τοῦ μὴ κατατελεῖσθαι, ὡς ἀποκρίσας τὴν δι' αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλῆος τοῦ ἐκ αὐτοῦ ἐρχοῦ τῆς οὐκίας κακοδοξίας. Euther. Serm. 2. Inter Theodor. Op. ed. Schulze, tom. v. p. 1126.

² Lucifuge isti Scripturarum. Tertull. De resurr. carnis, c. 47. p. 354.

³ Τοῦτο γὰρ αὐτοῖς αἰ ὡς τὴν ἐπιμολογίαν, μὴ καὶ τὴν διὰ τὴν γράφην διδασκίαν τὰς ἀεικαίους ψυχὰς, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς ἑαυτῶν σοφίας παρακινεῖσθαι τὴν ἀλυσίαν. Basil. Ep. 8. ed. Bened. tom. iii. p. 81.

⁴ Cum enim ex Scripturis arguuntur in accusationem convertuntur ipsarum Scripturarum, quasi non recte habeant, neque sint ex auctoritate, et quia varie sint dictæ; et quia non possit ex his inveniri veritas ab his qui nesciant traditionem. Adv. hær. iii. 3.

⁵ Lib. i. c. 20. ed. Mæss. c. 17. ed. Grab.

⁶ Lib. i. c. 26. ed. Mæss. c. 24. ed. Grab.

⁷ Τὴν Μαρτίου ἀρχὴν προσηγορεύει δὲ ξαν. Clem. Al. Strom. lib. vii. p. 906. (ed. Potter.)

⁸ Καθὰρ ὁ Βασίλειος, καὶ Γλαυκίας ἐγγράφοι διδασκαλοὶ, ὡς ἀρχοῦσι αὐτοῖ, τὴν

And Ptolemy, the Valentinian, expressly asserts that ther doctrine was derived from Apostolical tradition, handed down to them by a successional delivery from the Apostles.¹

And so usual was it for heretics to prefer this claim, that Jerome says of them, generally, that they were accustomed to say, —“ We are the sons of those wise men who, from the beginning, have delivered to us the doctrine of the Apostles ;”² and he contrasts them with those who derive their knowledge from Scripture.³

It is quite true, that the tradition pleaded by these heretics, was of a different kind to that claimed by Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen, for that which they delivered as the substance of the faith taught by the Apostles ; because the former was a tradition handed down by certain private individuals only ; whereas the latter was affirmed to be the tradition of all the Apostolical churches ; but, nevertheless, it is evidence to an opponent, as far as it goes, against the universality of the orthodox doctrine ; and evidence which it is not fair altogether to keep out of sight, and say that the heretics did not dare to appeal to tradition, for that it was *altogether* against them, and rested upon interpretations of Scripture, which they *acknowledged to be new*. The cause of truth gains nothing by such statements.

And these claims must be judged by us, in a measure, upon their own merits ; because, though the testimony of a few contemporary authors, whose writings we possess, affords *very strong* evidence against them, this evidence is not *conclusive*. What we want is *divine testimony* ; and when professing Christians are divided among themselves as to what is the truth, it is useless to attempt to affix the title of a divine informant to the testimony of any one portion of them, however large it may be.

But still further ; the appeals of the heretics to patristical tradition, were not all of this kind, but often of a more general nature ; and especially in those questions which arose at a later period of the church, and with which alone almost we are concerned at the present day, I mean those connected with the Arian, Nestorian, Pelagian, and such like controversies.

From a fragment of a writer on the orthodox side, who wrote

Πατροῦ ἱμῶντα· οἱ αὐτοὶ δὲ καὶ Οὐαλεντινὸν Θεωδοτὶ ἀνακινῶσι (scg. Θεωδοτὶ δυνάμει, Ρότετ et al.) παροῦσιν ἡνριμὸς δ' αὐτοὶ ἡγήσαντο Παύλου. Lib. vii. p. 898.

¹ Μάθετε γὰρ, Θεοὶ διδοῦντες, εἴς τε καὶ τῆς τούτου ἀρχῆς τε καὶ γένεσιν, ἀξίωμα τῆς Αποστολικῆς παραδοτικῆς, ἢ καὶ διδοῦντος καὶ ἡμῶς παραλαβάντων, μετὰ καὶ τοῦ κατιστοῦς πάσης τῶν λόγων τῆς τοῦ Σωτῆρος διδασκαλίας. Ptol. Ep. ad Floram, ap. Epiph. Adv. her. h. 33. § 7. p. 222. ed. 1622.

² Filii sumus sapientium qui ab initio doctrinam nobis apostolicam tradiderunt. Hieron. Comm. in Is. c. 19. tom. 4. c. 293. ed. Vall. tom. 3. c. 184. ed. Ben.

³ Ib.

as early as the commencement of the third century, (the fragment is preserved to us by Eusebius,) we find that the followers of Artemon, who denied the divinity of our Saviour, claimed "*all the antients and the Apostles themselves* as in favour of their views;" and maintained that their doctrine, which they call "the truth of the Gospel," was "preserved until the times of Victor."¹ We have already quoted the passage more at length above, and have seen how the claim was met by their orthodox opponent: and in dealing with the opponents of the orthodox doctrine, should remember with him that our evidence on the contrary side, is only evidence of the same nature; that is, resting upon the testimony of a few individuals; and not be hasty in stopping the mouths of our adversaries with a claim to a divine informant. I believe that the claim of these heretics was an impudent assertion, diametrically opposed to the facts of the case; but one great reason why I believe it to be so, is from the fact that Scripture clearly maintains the opposite doctrine.

The similar claims of succeeding heretics were of a still more plausible kind, being connected with questions which had not previously been the subjects of public discussion; and on which, therefore, the earlier Fathers had not in general spoken clearly and determinately.

Thus Arius and his party confidently appealed to patristical tradition as in their favour.

In the Letter to Alexander, written by Arius and his earliest followers, they call his doctrine "the faith which we have received from our ancestors."² And in a fragment preserved by Athanasius, Arius uses the following language;—"According to the faith of the elect of God, those to whom God hath given intelligence, holy children, orthodox, and who have received the Holy Spirit of God, I have learned these things from those who are partakers of wisdom, polished, taught of God, and in all things wise. Being of the same mind with them, I have closely followed their footsteps," &c.³

Two of these are mentioned by their orthodox opponents, in order to exculpate them from the charge of supporting Arianism; viz., Origen⁴ and Dionysius of Alexandria.⁵ The defence of the latter by Athanasius,⁶ is unanswerable; but this very case shows

¹ Euseb. H. E. v. 28. Routh, Reliq. Sacr. vol. 2. pp. 7, 8. See p. 189 above.

² Ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν ἡ ἐκ προγόνων. Epiphani. Adv. hæres. h. 69. § 7. tom. 1. p. 732. ed. 1622.

³ Κατὰ πίστιν ἐκλεκτῶν Θεοῦ, συνόντων Θεοῦ, παίδων ἀγίων, ὁρθοδόμων, ἀγαθῶν Θεοῦ πνεύματι λαβόντων, ταπεινῶν ἐργῶν ὑποταγῆς μοτιχομένων, ἀσκήτων, διδασκῶν, κατὰ πάντα σοφῶν τε τούτων κατ' ἴχνος ἡλθον ἐν αἱσιν ὁμοδόξως, &c. &c. Athanas. orat. 1a. contra Arian. § 5. tom. i. pp. 408, 9. ed. Bened.

⁴ Socrat. Hist. Eccl. iv. 21.

⁵ Athanas. De Sent. Dionys. Op. tom. i. pp. 243, &c.

⁶ Ib

that it is impossible to expect to obtain the catholic consent of the Fathers, upon a point not under discussion in their time ; for Athanasius himself allows¹ that the passage cited by the Arians would, if it had stood alone, have decided the appeal in their favour. It was a passage written in the heat of controversy against an opposite error to that of Arius ; but it so *happened* that Dionysius was called upon to explain his views more fully on the point, on account of the misapprehensions his statements had caused ; and he satisfactorily showed that he held no such views as those of Arius. But how many would there be who, having expressed themselves thus unwarily, might never have been called upon to give any further explanation, and whose statements, therefore, would seem to favour the views of Arius ? Nay, we have found that this is, in fact, the case, even with some authors whose writings remain to us. What becomes, then, of catholic consent, in such a case ? We may say, indeed, that such statements are to be accounted for as those of Dionysius ; and this *may* be very true ; but those who are inclined to the opposite doctrine are, of course, justified in interpreting the expressions they find, as they stand ; and it is only trifling with them and ourselves, to demand that they be interpreted according to our views, and then boast of catholic consent. It is one thing to be able to account for the statements of many of the early Catholic Fathers, when they seem to deviate from strict orthodoxy, and show that they may be *reconciled* with the assertion of their having held the true doctrine by a consideration of the circumstances of the case, and therefore that it is *probable* that their meaning was orthodox ; and another to maintain that that, and no other doctrine, is clearly and consistently maintained in their writings, and challenge their consent in its favour. We shall find, indeed, practically that we are continually called upon in the writings of the Fathers, to make allowances for the heat of opposition to the controversy they were engaged in at the moment, which often led them into expressions verging upon, or even decidedly favourable to, opposite errors. And this is a fault which entirely prevents the Fathers from bearing any such consentient testimony as our opponents dream of, and peculiarly disqualifies them from performing the office of a judge of controversies. And for the same reason, the Scripture is peculiarly qualified to be so ; because, though it may not have entered into the particulars of the point in controversy, it has stated the truth, simply and plainly, and without ever having, when condemning one error, verged to the opposite ; or, when stating a truth, *overstated* it. The elements which it gives us

¹ Ib. p. 246, and see Basil. Ep. ad Max. Ep. 9. Ed. Ben. tom. 3. p. 90.

for determining the point in question, are all such as, when properly used, lead to the truth. There are no statements calculated to lead us astray, no representations for which allowances are to be made, either for the words used, or for a possible bias of mind or ardour of spirit that affected the tone of the instruction given.

Many other testimonies might be brought of the claim made by the Arians and Semi-Arians to patristical tradition. Auxentius, Bishop of Milan, in his Letter to Valentinian and Valens, says,—“My creed is that in which I have been *taught from my infancy* as I have received from the holy Scriptures,” proceeding to recite the antient creed,¹ and he calls the faith which he defends, (being as he allows that which was agreed upon at Ariminum) the catholic faith, and declares that the catholic bishops had always condemned and anathematized the opposite doctrine, which he calls heresy.² And so Eunomius boasted—“We adhere to those things which were demonstrated both by the saints [or, according to other MSS. the holy Fathers] of old and now by us.”³

So the Semi-Arians at the Synod of Antioch in 341 say, “We receive no other faith than that which was published from the beginning;”⁴ and at their Synod at Sardica in 347, they use such language as the following; “It is our constant prayer, beloved brethren, first that the holy and catholic church of the Lord, free from all dissensions and schisms, may everywhere preserve the unity of the Spirit and the bond of love by a right faith. . . . Secondly, that the Church’s rule, and *the holy tradition and judgments of our fathers* may remain for ever firm and unmoved,”⁵ &c. And again, “Since therefore we cannot depart from *the tradition of our fathers*⁶ . . . neither do we ourselves receive the aforementioned [i. e. Athanasius and Marcellus] to the honour and dignity of the Church, and we justly condemn those who do.”⁷ And so they speak of themselves afterwards as “adhering to the laws of God and *the traditions of their fathers*.”⁸

¹ Ex infantia quemadmodum doctus sum sicut accepi de sanctis Scripturis credidi. Hilar. Contr. Auxent. § 14. Op. col. 1270. ed. Bened.

² Ib. § 15. col. 1272.

³ Ἡμεῖς τοὺς τι ὑπο τῶν ἀγίων [αἱ ἀγία πατὴρ] καὶ παλαι καὶ νῦν ὅς ἡμεῖς ἀποδεχόμεθα ἡμῶν. Εὐνομ. in Basil. Adv. Eunom. lib. ii. § 18. tom. i. p. 253. ed. Ben.

⁴ Οὐτε ἄλλη τῆς πίστεως παρα τῆς ἐκ ἀρχῆς καθέστεας ὡς ἐμαυτοὶ. Socr. H. E. ii. 7.

⁵ Ut ecclesiam regula sanctaque parentum traditio atque iudicia in perpetuum firma solidaeque permanent.

⁶ Quamobrem quoniam a parentum traditione discedere non possumus, &c.

⁷ Hilarii Fragma. in Op. col. 1308 and 1319. ed. Bened.

⁸ Adherentes legibus Dei traditionibusque paternis. Ib.

And at their Synod at Ancyra in 538, they speak in the same strain still more strongly, "We entreat you, venerable Lords and fellow-worshippers," they say in their synodical epistle, "that having read these letters, ye will embrace firmly the faith *delivered to us from our fathers*, and that you will signify that our faith is agreeable to yours; that those who dare to *introduce* this impiety, being fully assured that we preserve *the faith which we have received from the Apostolical times through the Fathers that have intervened down to our times*, as our patrimony, may either through shame be turned to the truth, or persisting may be cut off from the church."¹

Similar language is usual at the other Arian Councils.²

The same claims we find to be made by the Aetians and Macedonians, who accused the orthodox of introducing *novelties* into the Christian faith;³ an accusation met by Gregory Nyssen by an appeal to *Scripture* as the judge.⁴

And when at the Council of Constantinople, at its session in 383, it was proposed by the Emperor, at the suggestion of one of the orthodox party, that the matters in dispute between them and the heretics present, viz. the Arians, Eunomians and Macedonians, should be determined by an appeal to the writings of the Fathers, these heretics asserted their reverence for the Fathers as their "*masters*," and many of them were desirous that the points in dispute should be so determined, though others objected to such a course. The account given by Socrates is as follows. The Emperor asks the heretics, "if they respect and receive the writings of the doctors that lived before the division of the church; and they having not denied that they did, but *on the contrary affirming that they altogether honoured them as masters*,⁵ the king again inquired whether they would follow them as trustworthy witnesses of the Christian faith. The leaders of the sectaries and the logicians among them, for there were many among them well fitted for disputation, doubted what to do. For there was a division among them, *some saying that the king's proposal was a good one*, and others that it was not

¹ Παρακαλούμεν ὑμᾶς Κύριε τιμωτάτοι συλλειτουργοὶ ὀψυχούτες ὅτι φασὶντι τε ἐκ πατρίων παραδόχῃσι πιστῇ, καὶ ὡς συμφωνοῦν ὑμῶν ὁρροῦμεν ὡς πιστοτατάλαμιν ὑποσημαίνεσθαι ἵνα πληροφορηθῶντι οἱ τῇ αὐτῇ ἀσέβειᾳ ἐπιστάτων τοιμάρτε, ὅτι καθάπερ εὐνοῖα τῶν τῶν ἐκ τῶν Ἀποστολικῶν χρόνῳ δια τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἀγῶν καὶ ἡμῶν Πατέρων ὑποδείξαντων πιστῇ διδακτοῦμεν, ἡ ἀσχυρήτως διεδοχθῆσονται, ἡ ἐπιμνηστικῇ ἀπολαμνύουσιν τῆς Εὐαγγελίας. Epiphanius. adv. Hær. b. 73. § 2. tom. i. p. 847.

² See Socrat. Hist. Eccl. lib. ii. cc. 19, 30 and 37.

³ Νωτοροποιὺς ἡμᾶς καὶ καποτομοὺς καὶ φρενέτας ἡμῶνται καὶ τι γὰρ οὐχὶ ἐπιστάτων ἀποκαλῶμεν. BASIL. de Sp. S. c. 6. § 13. tom. iii. p. 10. And Gassien. Ntes. De Trin. prope init. tom. ii. pp. 439, 440. ed. 1615.

⁴ Greg. Nyss. ut supra. We shall notice the passage more particularly hereafter. See c. 10.

⁵ Πάντες αὐτοὺς ὡς καθένας

suitable to their object. For they were *differently affected towards the books of the antients*;¹ and they no longer agreed one with the other, and they were divided, not only some sects towards others, but those of the same heresy among themselves;" and he proceeds to say that in consequence of this diversity of opinion the Emperor ordered each party to present their creed to him.² The appeal to the Fathers, therefore, though declined by some, was by others willingly accepted.

And we are told by the learned Henry Wharton, that "Eunomius, the heretic, in his Apology, extant in MS. in St. Martin's Library, *everywhere pleadeth the tradition of precedent ages*, and professeth to follow that as his only rule of faith. 'It is necessary,' saith he, 'for those who treat of matters of faith, setting before them the holy tradition which hath all along obtained from the times of the Fathers, as a rule and canon, to make use of this accurate rule to judge of those things which shall be said.'" Afterwards proposing his blasphemous opinion about the Holy Ghost, he introduceth it with this Preface,³ "*Exactly following the doctrine of the Holy Fathers*, and receiving it from them, we believe," &c. "This, then," he adds, "was the artifice and practice of the ancient heretics. What the practice of the Catholic Fathers was in opposing these heretics, or establishing any necessary article of faith; that they accounted Scripture to be *the only adequate rule of faith, and to contain in express and plain words all things necessary to be believed*; that they rejected all articles which could not be thence deduced as spurious and false, or at least uncertain and unnecessary; and always asserted the *sufficiency of Scripture*, I will not here insist to prove; *since that point hath been so often handled and cleared by the writers of our church*.'" ⁴

The same was the case with Nestorius and his favourers among the oriental bishops, who claimed patristical tradition as in their favour.

Nestorius appealed to the Nicene Fathers, as "those holy Fathers who are beyond all praise,"⁵ and maintains that their confessions is in favour of his views;⁶ and when John, bishop of An-

¹ Άλλοι άλλος υχει πρι τα βιβλια των παλαιων.

² Soer. Hist. Eccl. v. 10. ed. Read. tom. ii. p. 273.

³ Άναγκασει δ' ισακ τους πρι τούτων λόγους ποιουμενους . . . την κρατουσαν αμαθην εκ των πατρων εναντι παραδοσι ασπη την γνομονα και κανονα προατιβιμενους ακριβη τούτω συγχαρη χρυσθαι κριτηριον πρις την των λεγομενων οικειρισιν. Apologetic. in fine Prologi.

⁴ Τη των αγωνων απασι φυλαττορικη διδασκαλια, παρ' αν καθορτικ . . . πιστιοτηκαμεν Post med.

⁵ See Preface to "A Treatise proving Scripture to be the rule of faith, by R. Peacock, &c." 1688. 4to. pp. viii, ix.

⁶ Sancti illi et supra omnem predicationem patres. Concil. Ephes. p. l. c. 16. Concil. ed. Par. 1671. tom. iii. col. 350.

⁷ Ib. c. 17. ib. col. 352.

tioch, wrote to him on the subject, to induce him, for the sake of peace, to apply the title, *mother of God* (*θεοτοκος*), to the Virgin Mary, as being one to which his people were accustomed, and which might be understood in a good sense, he admits that he had heard from many and common friends that his sentiments were the same with those of the fathers and doctors of the church.¹

And the oriental bishops, who favoured his views at the Council of Ephesus, distinctly claim to be considered the defenders of the antient faith of the church. "We are called," they say, in their Petition to the Emperor, "to confirm the faith of the holy Fathers."² And again, "Let not your majesty despise the faith which is corrupted, into which both you and your progenitors were baptized; upon which also the foundations of the church are based, for which the most holy martyrs underwent with joy innumerable kinds of death; by the aid of which also you have overcome the barbarians For it will be destroyed if the doctrine which Cyril has *introduced* into the faith, and other *heretics* have confirmed, should prevail."³

And again, in their letter to Rufus, bishop of Thessalonica, having regretted his absence, they add, "For your holiness, had you been present, would have appeased the tumults that happened, and the disorders perpetrated, and would have contended with us against the *heresies introduced into the orthodox faith*, and that evangelical and apostolical doctrine which *the children ever receiving from their fathers have conveyed down unaltered even to our times*."⁴

It would be easy to add other proofs.

Nor must we forget that the Nestorians to this day "maintain that the doctrine he [i. e. Nestorius] taught was much older than himself, and had been *handed down from the earliest times of the Christian church*."⁵

Pass we next to the Eutychians, who were condemned at the Council of Chalcedon, and we shall find that they, in like man-

¹ Εἰ γὰρ ἡ διανοία σου τοῦ αὐτοῦ τοῖς πατρὶσι καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ διδασκαλοὶ προσηματωσὶς ἔχεται, (τοῦτο γὰρ, διὰ πολλῶν καὶ κοινῶν φίλων πρὸς σου, δεσποτά, μακαριώτατον) τί λυπὸν το σὸν εὐσεβὲς φρόνημα καταλλελοῦ ὀνόματι δημοσιῶσαι. Conc. Eph. p. i. c. 23. col. 349.

² Vocati sumus ad confirmandam sanctorum patrum fidem. Tertullianus orient. episc. ad Imperat. inter Act. Concil. Eph. ib. col. 730.

³ Ne despicat vestra Majestas fidem quæ adulteratur, in quam et vos baptizati estis et vestri progenitores; in quam et ecclesie fundamenta sunt jacta, propter quam sanctissimi martyres innumera mortis genera, cum voluptate susceperunt, cum qua et barbaros vicistis dirumpetur enim si opinio quam Cyrillus fidei induxit et alii heretici confirmarunt invaleseat. Ib. col. 731.

⁴ Ἐπαινεῖ γὰρ αἱ παραγωγόμεναι (ἢ οὐ ἀγνοοῦν) καὶ τὰς γεννημένας συγχύσεις, καὶ τὰς τοιοῦταις ἀταξίας, καὶ οὐ ἡμῖν αὐ κατηγόρησαν τὰς ἐπιστολὰς αἰρούσι τὴν ἐκδοξὴν πίστιν, καὶ τὴν εὐαγγελίαν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν διδασκαλίαν, ἢ παῖδες παρὰ πατέρων αὐ διχημένοι μέχρις ἡμῶν ταύτην παρεστῆσαν. Ep. Orient. Ep. ad Rufum. Ib. col. 736, 7.

⁵ Mosheim. Eccl. Hist. Cent. v. p. 2. c. 5. § 12. Engl. ed. 1826. vol. ii. p. 67.

ner, urged the same claim; maintaining that the orthodox Fathers were on their side.

At the Synod of Constantinople in 448, Eutyches himself says, "I follow the Fathers" "I have read the blessed Cyril, and the other Fathers, and the holy Athanasius, that they said that he was of two natures before the union; but after the union and incarnation, they no longer spoke of two natures, but one."¹

And in his Letter to Pope Leo, after his condemnation at the Synod, he strongly urges the testimony of the Fathers in his favour.

So, also, in his Petition to the Synod (or rather, Council) of Ephesus, in 449, he says,—“I hold all the holy Fathers equally with your holinesses as orthodox and faithful, and have taken them as my masters; anathematizing Manes, Valentinus, Apollinarius, and Nestorius, and all the heretics up to Simon Magus.”²

And at this Synod, where the confession of Eutyches was received as orthodox, Dioscorus, the president, who favoured Eutyches, admonished the bishops present, at the commencement of the proceedings, that they were to consider whether the views advanced by the Eutychians, were agreeable to what had been *ordained by the holy Fathers*.³

And when the monks who sided with Eutyches were asked by Dioscorus, “respecting the presence of the Saviour in the flesh, Are your views the same as those of the blessed Athanasius, and the blessed Cyril, and the blessed Gregory, and *all the orthodox bishops*?”⁴ their leader, Eleusinus, replied, “We are all of the same mind with both the holy Fathers that met at Nicæa, and those who were assembled here [i. e. at Ephesus, at the Third General Council].”⁵

And in the Council of Chalcedon, Carosus, and the other Eutychian leaders, declare individually;—“My faith is that of the three hundred and eighteen bishops that were at Nicæa, in which I was baptized. I know no other.”⁶

¹ Ακολουθῶ τοὺς πατέρας . . . Ἐγὼ ἀνέγνων τοῦ μακαρίου Κυρίλλου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πατέρων καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Ἀθανασίου, ὅτι ἐκ δύο μὴ φύσιν εἶπεν πρὸ τῆς ἐνώσεως, μετὰ δὲ τῆς ἐνώσεως καὶ τὴν σάρκασιν εὐκατὶ δύο φύσιν εἶπεν ἄλλα μίαν. Concil. Constant. Act. 7. Inter Act. Conc. Chalc.; Concil. tom. iv. col. 228.

² Πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους πατέρας, ὡς καὶ ἡ ὑμετέρα θεολογία, ὁρθοδόξους ἔχον καὶ πιστοὺς, καὶ διδασκαλοὺς ὁμολογῶντες ἡμῶν, ἀναθεματίζων Μαννὴν, Βαλentinόν, Ἀπολλινάριον, καὶ Νεστόριον, καὶ πάντας τοὺς αἰρετικούς ἕως Σιμῶνος τοῦ μαγού. Ib. col. 136.

³ Χρὴ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐκείνα τα ἀνάγκη πρῶτον ζητῆσθαι, καὶ ἡμᾶς δοκιμασθαι ἢ συκοφάνειαν εἶναι τῶν ἐπιστῶν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων. Ib. col. 128.

⁴ Περὶ τῆς ἐνσαρκώσεως τοῦ Σωτῆρος παρουσίας οὕτως φρονεῖτε ὡς ὁ μακάριος Ἀθανάσιος καὶ ὁ μακάριος Κυρίλλος καὶ ὁ μακάριος Γρηγόριος καὶ πάντες οἱ ὁρθοδόξοι πιστοί. Ib. col. 279, 282.

⁵ Πάντες οὕτω φρονεομεν, ὡς καὶ οἱ ἐν Νικαίᾳ συνελθόντες καὶ οἱ ἐνταῦθα συναλεξάμενοι ἅγιοι πατέρες. Ib. col. 282.

⁶ Τὴν τῶν τριακοσίων δικακτῶν τῶν ἐν Νικαίᾳ γενομένων πατέρων πίστιν, ἐν ἧ καὶ ἐβπτίσθην, οὐδὲ ἐγὼ ἄλλαν πίστιν οὐκ οἶδα. Conc. Chalced. Act. 4. Ib. col. 530.

To these we might add the case of the Pelagians, who notoriously claimed the support of primitive Fathers.¹

Nay, Lactantius tells us that all heretics reckoned themselves to be the best Christians, and their own church to be *the catholic church*.²

And Salvian, speaking of heretics, says, "They are heretics with us, not in their own estimation. For they so completely reckon themselves to be *catholics*, that they decry us as heretics. What, therefore, they are with us, that we are with them."³

It is quite clear, then, that all these heretics considered that patristical tradition was in their favour. And therefore I doubt whether it was wise in Dr. Waterland (to whose learned and valuable labours in proof of the great preponderance of the evidence in favour of the orthodox faith, we are deeply indebted,) to bring forward the charges of novelty made by some of the orthodox against the Arians, and while he is altogether silent as to the similar charges made on the other side, quote these as an undeniable proof that Arianism *was* a complete novelty,⁴—especially when he must have been fully aware that even a worse heresy, on the same point, had long before found its defenders among Christians.⁵

These charges, being reciprocal, prove nothing on either side. And when we come to investigate the actual evidence producible from the writings that remain to us, we find the true state of

¹ See Whitak. De pecc. orig. lib. ii. c. 2.

² Singuli quique cœtus hæreticorum se potissimum Christianos et suam eam Catholicam ecclesiam putant. Div. Inst. lib. iv. c. ult.

³ Apud nos sunt hæretici, apud se non sunt. Nam in tantum se catholicos esse judicant, ut nos ipsos titulo hæreticæ appellationis infament. Quod ergo illi nobis sunt, hoc nos illis. SALVIAN. De Gub. Dei. lib. v. prope init. ed. 1669. p. 100.

⁴ See the Preface to his Second Defence.

⁵ In the same place he has suffered himself to fall into a misstatement respecting the conduct of the heretics at Constantinople, with regard to the writings of the Fathers. Having given a long extract from Socrates, showing the nature of the proposal made, he stops precisely at the point where the reception given to the proposal is narrated, and contents himself with giving the following account of it. "Whereupon the heads of the different sects were at first much confounded and divided among themselves, some commending what the Emperor had proposed, and others not; but in conclusion, they ALL chose rather to rest the cause solely on logical disputation, than upon the testimonies of the ancients." (pp. 13, 14.) And in his chapter "on the use and value of ecclesiastical antiquity," in his "Importance of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity," he alludes to it again as a proof that the heretics, when practically brought to the test, declined the appeal to patristical tradition. (Works, vol. 5. pp. 324, 5.) This is clearly a misrepresentation of the matter; because the heretics in question asserted that they "highly honoured the Fathers as their masters;" and when put to the test, a portion of them (large or small, we know not) were still willing and desirous to be judged by the tradition of the Fathers. Such statements are to be regretted. In the end they prejudice the cause of truth.

the case to be, that the Fathers often wrote hotly and hastily, and consequently incorrectly: and therefore may be quoted in almost all the great questions of doctrine that have agitated the church since the very earliest period, on both sides. This is the case even with those writings that have been preserved to us; and these, it must be recollected, form but a few of those that were published, especially of the earlier ages.

And hence it was that so many heresies (as an antient writer tells us) brought forward passages of the Fathers in their defence; and that Eusebius, in his defence of Origen, was able to give very many testimonies of preceding Fathers in favour of some of his errors.¹

Let me not, however, be misunderstood in the above remarks. I am very far from meaning to convey the idea by them, that the heretics had *such* support in the writings of the primitive Fathers as they often boasted of. My conviction is that they had not. And I maintain that an accurate examination of the writings of the primitive Fathers will prove to any impartial inquirer, that the *weight* of patristical testimony is beyond comparison in favour of the orthodox faith. But my object is to show to those who are claiming antiquity, as if it were *obviously* and *exclusively* in their favour, and putting forth pretensions to such a catholic consent as can never be proved, and, in fact, never existed; and asserting that the heretics could find nothing favourable to their views in the writings of the preceding Fathers, and even (as some do) declaring that they rejected all appeals to antiquity; and resting the claims of the orthodox faith to our belief upon such a foundation, to beware how they take such ground, and especially how they make that supposed consent the sole authorised interpreter of Scripture, and tell us that Scripture cannot be understood without it. The preceding extracts (and many more to the same purpose might easily be added) abundantly show that the Arians, Nestorians, and others, claimed patristical tradition in their favour, as much as their opponents; and inveighed against the *novelties* and *heresies* of their opponents, and their opposition to the sentiments of the "catholic church," as strongly as the orthodox.

Will it be said that they all made this claim without any foundation for it? It may, by men wedded to a hypothesis, or by hot and injudicious controversialists. But I suspect that men of cooler judgment, when they come to view the *whole* case, will take different ground; and content themselves with maintaining that, taking the writings of the early Fathers as a whole, there is very strong testimony to be found in them in favour of the ortho-

¹ Auctor Synod. Adv. Trag. Iren. c. 198, in Routh, Reliq. 8. vol. iii. p. 267.

dox faith, and that passages which appear favourable to views which did not come into discussion till a period subsequent to the date of those passages cannot always be taken as proofs that the writer supported those views, because, not having those views in his mind, he might easily have expressed himself incautiously, especially if he was writing in opposition to a contrary prevailing error. So far we are on safe and immovable ground. And such, as it appears to me, is all the aid we could naturally and reasonably expect from the writings of the Fathers. But beyond this our claims are mere assertions; assertions which if true could not be proved, and which are in reality contrary to the plain facts of the case.

SECT. VIII.—WHAT THE TRACTATORS CALL "CATHOLIC CONSENT" IS NOT TREATED BY THEMSELVES IN MANY CASES AS AFFORDING ANY SUFFICIENT PROOF OF THE DOCTRINES SO SUPPORTED.

To illustrate this subject still further, I will now proceed to point out some cases where there appears to be what our opponents would call "catholic consent;" and which may lead them and others to reflect how far their system is characterized by consistency.

(1.) The doctrine taught by the Fathers of the first three centuries as to the Divine appearances to man under the Old Testament dispensation.

These Fathers seem universally to ascribe all these appearances to the Son.¹ And as the principal passages have been carefully collected by Dr. Burton, I shall present the reader with his statement of them, which probably may have more weight with my opponents than any *catena* of my own.

"It was Christ who talked with Adam, Gen. iii. 8, 9, where the person is said to be the Lord God. v. Theophil. in Autol. ii. 22. Tertull. adv. Prax. c. 16. p. 509. Irenæus iv. 10. p. 239.

"It was Christ who spoke to Noah, Gen. vi. 13. Irenæus iv. 10.

"It was Christ who went down to confound the tongues at Babel, Gen. xi. 5, where it is said that it was *the Lord*. Justin M. Dial. cum Tryph. c. 127. p. 220. Tertull. adv. Prax. c. 16. p. 509. Novatian. c. 25. p. 723.

"It was Christ who appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God, Gen. xvii. 1. Justin. M. Dial. cum Tryph. c. 127. p. 220. Clem. Alex. Pæd. i. 7. p. 131.

"It was Christ who appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, Gen. xviii. 1, where he is called *the Lord and the judge*

of all the earth, ver. 25. Justin. M. Dial. cum Tryph. c. 56, p. 152. Clem. Alex. Pæd. i. 7. p. 131. Tertull. Adv. Marc. iii. 9. p. 402. Origen. in Gen. Hom. iv. 3.

"It was Christ who rained fire upon Sodom, Gen. xix. 24. The Fathers particularly mention the expression, 'then *the Lord* rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire *from the Lord.*' Juntin. M. Dial. cum Tryph. c. 56. p. 152 : c. 127, p. 221. Irenæus, iii. 6. p. 180. Tertull. Adv. Prax. 13, 16, p. 507, 509.

"It was Christ who tempted Abraham, Gen. xxii. Origen. in Gen. Hom. viii. 8. Cyp. Test. ii. 5. p. 286.

"It was Christ who appeared to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 13, where the person calls himself '*the Lord God of Abraham and the God of Isaac.*' Justin. M. Dial. cum Tryph. c. 58. p. 156. Clem. Alex. Pæd. i. 7. p. 131.

"It was Christ who spoke to Jacob in a dream, Gen. xxxi. 11, 13, where he calls himself *the God of Bethel*, (see Gen. xxviii. 13, 19.) Justin. M. Dial. cum Tryph. c. 58. p. 155. Cyp. Test. ii. 5. Novatian. c. 27. p. 725.

"It was Christ who wrestled with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 24, where it is expressly said that he was God, ver. 28, 30. Justin. M. Dial. cum Tryph. c. 58. p. 155, 156. c. 125. p. 218. Irenæus p. 239. Clem. Alex. Pæd. i. 7. p. 132. Concil. Antioch. (Reliq. Sac. ii. p. 470.)

"It was Christ who appeared to Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 1, 9. Justin M. Dial. cum Tryph. c. 58. p. 155. where he says, 'he is called God, and is God, and will be.' Cyp. Test. ii. 6.

"It was Christ who appeared to Moses in the Bush, Exod. iii. 2, where the person calls himself '*the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ;*' and at ver. 14, '*I am that I am.*' Justin. M. Apol. i. 62. p. 80. Dial. cum Tryph. c. 60, p. 157. Irenæus iv. 10, 12. Clem. Alex. Cohort. ad Gent. p. 7. Tertull. Adv. Jud. c. 9. p. 194.

"It was Christ who said to Moses, (Exod. xx. 2,) "*I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.*" Clem. Alex. Pæd. i. 7. p. 131.

"It was Christ who spoke to Moses, Levit. vi. 1, and consequently who delivered the whole of the Law. Origen. in Levit. Hom. iv. init.

"It was Christ who appeared to Joshua near Jericho, Josh. v. 13. Justin. M. Dial. cum Tryph. c. 62. p. 159—60.

"These instances might be multiplied so as to make a volume ; but enough perhaps has been said to show that *all the Fathers agreed in entertaining the same opinion.*"¹

¹ Testim. of Ante-Nicene Fathers to divinity of Christ. 2nd. edit. Ox. 1839. pp. 38—40.

But notwithstanding this "catholic consent," Dr. Burton adds, "*I again repeat that I am not concerned to inquire into the soundness of this opinion,*" which shows that he at least did not consider such a consent as a sufficient proof of the truth of a doctrine, or interpretation of Scripture, at any rate, on such a point. He remarks, however, very justly, that "the Fathers who held it could not have believed that Christ was a *mere man*, nor ever an *angel*; they assert over and over again that the person who appeared to the patriarchs could not be an angel, because he is called God and Jehovah; and they as expressly assert that he who revealed himself as God and Jehovah was *not the Father*, but the Son." "I may add," he observes, "that the Arians openly professed their belief that it was Christ 'to whom the Father said, *Let us make man*, &c. who was seen by the patriarchs face to face, who gave the law and spake by the prophets, &c.'" (Athanas. De Synodis, vol. i. p. 740. see also p. 743.) Eusebius, who has been suspected of Arianism, devotes the fifth book of his *Demonstratio Evangelica* to establishing this point. See also this same work, i. 5. p. 11."

The fact is, the Arians stoutly contended for this opinion as strengthening their cause, and showing that though the Son was God, there was yet some difference between the nature of the Son and the Father, and the earliest supporters of the opinion that some of these appearances might be attributed to the Father are, I think, to be found among the opponents of the Arians.

The Ante-Nicene Fathers, however, very peremptorily contended for the former opinion as the only one which could be tolerated.

Thus Justin Martyr, speaking of the appearance to Moses at the bush, says, "No one who has the least understanding will dare to say that the Maker and Father of the universe, having left all things that are above the heaven, appeared in a little portion of the earth."¹

And elsewhere, that he who appeared to Abraham at Mamre was sent "by another, who remains always in the supercelestial regions, and is seen by no one, and never conversed with any one in his own person, whom we look upon as the Maker and Father of the universe."² And he says that the Jews who thought that

¹ Οὐ τοι ποτε τοῦ ὅλου καὶ πατρὸς καταλείποντάς τε ἑνὸς οὐρανοῦ ἀπάντα πᾶσι γὰς μέρος παραθεῖναι, πᾶς ὁρῶσιν, καὶ μικροὶ γούν εἶχον, τοῦ μόνου ὁπῶν. Dial. cum Tryph. § 60. p. 157. ed. Ben. (p. 283. ed. Col. 1688.

² Τὸ ἄλλοι τοῦ πᾶσι ὑπερουρανοῦς αἰ μόνοντος, καὶ οὐδὲν ὁρῶντος ἢ ἐμιλλῶντος δι' ἑαυτοῦ ποτε, οἱ ποτε τοῦ ὅλου καὶ πατρὸς νοοῦμαι. Dial. cum Tryph. § 56. p. 150. ed. Ben. (ed. Col. p. 275.) The same view is also expressed still more strongly in § 127. p. 230. (ed. Col. pp. 356, 7.)

it was God the Father who appeared to Moses, were on that account reprehended by Isaiah and our Lord as knowing neither the Father nor the Son.¹

The same view is enforced by Theophilus of Antioch, in a passage already quoted from him in a previous page.²

So also the bishops assembled at Antioch, against Paul of Samosata, affirm that it was Christ who appeared to the patriarchs, "sometimes spoken of as an angel, sometimes as Lord, sometimes as God. For it is impious to suppose that the God of the universe is called an angel."³

So Tertullian observes that the God who appeared at various times to men from the beginning, could be no other than the Word who was about to become flesh,⁴ and ridicules as an absurdity the supposition that the omnipotent invisible God, whom no man hath seen nor can see,⁵ should have walked about in Paradise, adding with his usual vehemence, that these things were not to be believed concerning the Son of God if they had not been written, and *perhaps not to be believed of the Father even though they had been written.*⁶

And, not to multiply authorities unnecessarily, the same view is laid down in the same peremptory terms by Novatian⁷ and Eusebius.⁸

I would ask then, Do our opponents consider themselves bound so to interpret Scripture? If they do, it is more than Augustine did, for he held that it was probably the Father who appeared

¹ Apol. la. § 63. p. 81. ed. Ben. (ed Col. Apol. 2a. p. 95.)

² See p. 192 above.

³ Ποτε μὲν ὡς ἀγγέλους, ποτε δὲ ὡς Κύριος, ποτε δὲ Θεὸς μαρτυροῦμενος· τοῦ μὲν γὰρ Θεοῦ τῶν ὁλῶν ἀσέβης ἀγγέλου νομισαὶ καλίστα. Syn. Antioch. adv. Paul. Samos. in Routh. Reliq. Sacr. vol. ii. p. 470.

⁴ Non alius potuit quam sermo qui caro erat futurus. Adv. Prax. c. xvi. p. 509.

⁵ Deus omnipotens ille invisibilis quem nemo vidit hominum nec videre potest. Ib. p. 510.

⁶ Scilicet et hæc nec de Filio Dei credenda fuisse si scripta non essent, fortasse non credenda de Patre licet scripta. Ib. p. 510. And see his treatise Adv. Jud. c. 9. med.

⁷ Ecce idem Moyses refert alio in loco, quod Abraham visus sit Deus. Atquin idem Moyses audit a Deo, quod nemo hominum Deum videat et vivat. Si videri non potest Deus quomodo visus est Deus? Aut si visus est, quomodo videri non potest? Nam et Johannes, *Deum nemo*, inquit, *vidit unquam*. Et Apostolus Paulus, *Quem vidit hominum nemo nec videre potest*. Sed non utique Scriptura mentitur. Ergo vere visus est Deus. Ex quo intelligi potest, quod non Pater visus sit, qui nunquam visus est, sed Filius. De Trin. c. 26. See also c. 25.

⁸ See his Demonstr. Evangel. lib. v. c. 9. p. 234. (ed. Col. 1688.) and cc. 13, 14. pp. 239—41, &c. If any passage can be produced from the Ante-Nicene Fathers opposed to this view, (and I shall not undertake absolutely to deny the possibility of such a passage being found,) I have only to observe that its sole effect will be to shift this example to the previous head, but I suspect that it will be difficult to do so.

on some occasions;¹ and evidently considered, as many others have done since, that the view we have shown to have been taken by the Ante-Nicene Fathers was an *Arian* view of the subject.²

(2.) The doctrine taught by the Fathers as to the re-appearance of Enoch and Elias hereafter on earth from the place to which they are translated, (which Irenæus tells us, as from apostolical tradition, is the Paradise in which Adam was) to wage war with Antichrist.

"The Presbyters who are the disciples of the Apostles," says Irenæus, "say that those who were translated, were translated thither, [i. e. to the Paradise in which Adam was]."³

"Enoch and Elias," says Tertullian, "are translated, neither is their death found; that is, it is delayed; but they are reserved to die at a future time, that they may extinguish Antichrist with their blood."⁴

So Hippolytus tell us that Enoch and Elias are the two witnesses spoken of in Rev. xi., who are to prophesy 360 days clothed in sackcloth.⁵

Justin Martyr in like manner bears witness that Elias is to come "when our Lord Jesus Christ is about to come in glory from heaven."⁶

A similar testimony is borne by Origen, though it is not so confidently stated by him.⁷

So Pseudo-Cyprian, "Likewise Enoch, who before the deluge was a righteous man and pleased God, and therefore was trans-

¹ See Augustine, De Trin. lib. ii. cc. 7—10. ed. Ben. tom. viii.

² Contr. Maximin. Arian. lib. iii. c. 26. tom. viii. col. 784 et seq.

³ Iren. adv. Hær. lib. v. c. 5. See also lib. iv. c. 16. ed. Mass. (c. 30. ed. Grab.) Augustine intimates the same, De Peccat. Mer. et Remiss. lib. i. c. 3. tom. x. col. 3. et Op. imperf. contr. Julian. lib. vi. c. 36. tom. x. col. 1360. but elsewhere speaks doubtfully. De pec. orig. c. 23. tom. x. col. 364. Chrysostom intimates that the place where Enoch is, is not known. In Gen. c. 4. hom. 21. § 4. tom. iv. p. 187.

⁴ Translatus est Enoch et Helias, nec mors eorum reperta est; dilata scilicet; ceterum morituri reservantur ut Antichristum sanguine suo extinguant. Tertull. De anima, c. 50. p. 301. See also c. 35. p. 291.

⁵ Μιαί μιν οὐ ἰδόμεθα στὰν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ τῇ ἐπὶ τῷ στήματι τοῦ συμπατοῦς ποσμοῦ προσελθὼν ἐν' ἐσχάτῃ σήμερι, [i. e. Daniel ix. 27.] ἢ ἰδόμεθα τοῖς μὲν ἡμῶν λεγόμενοι οἱ δύο πνεύματα Ἐνὼχ καὶ Ἠλίας. Οὗτοι γὰρ κηρύττουσιν ἡμᾶς χιλίαις διακοσίαις ἔτην. Παν-βιβλήμην σαλμοῦ, μεταναίει τὰ λαὸν καὶ πασι τοῖς ἐθνέσι καταγγέλλουσι. Hippol. De Antichristo § 43. pp. 20, 21. ed. Fabric. And see §§ 46, 47 where he refers to this as a fulfilment of Mal. iv. 5. and Rev. xi. 3.

⁶ Ὁ ἡμετέρος Κύριος τούτο αὐτοῖς ἐδίδαγμασιν αὐτοὺς παρέσθαι γινώσκων, ὡς καὶ Ἠλίας ἀπεστέθει. καὶ ἡμεῖς τούτο σπουδαίᾳ γινώσκων, ὅτι μὲν αὐτὸν ἐν ὧν παρὰ τὸν οὐρανὸν ὁ ἡμετέρος κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. Dial. cum Tryph. § 49. p. 145. ed. Ben. (p. 268. ed. Col. 1688.)

⁷ Εἰκοσι γὰρ ἔτι τούτων [i. e. Mal. iv. 5, 6.] δεικνύσθαι ὅτι προεγγραμμένον ὁ Ἠλίας τῷ ἀδελφῷ Χριστῷ ἐν ὧν. Comm. in Matth. tom. xiii. § 2. vol. iii. p. 572. See also his Comm. in Joh. 1. vol. iv. p. 92.

lated alive in the flesh in which he was born from that world to a place which God knows; from which place at the end of the world he has to be brought again into this world, whence he was translated, to confound and resist antichrist; and being slain by him, they shall fulfil their witness and live for ever to everlasting ages."¹

So Pseudo-Ambrose or Hilary the Deacon. "Therefore, he attributes this to himself, because he was always in want, suffering persecutions and afflictions beyond others, as Enoch and Elias shall suffer, who in the last times are to be Apostles. For they are to be sent before Christ to prepare the people of God and fortify all churches to resist Antichrist; and the Apocalypse witnesses that they are to suffer persecution and to be slain."²

So Augustine intimates that it is believed that Enoch and Elias are to return to the earth and there die.³

Chrysostom expressly asserts that Elias himself is to reappear on earth before our Lord's second advent.⁴

And lastly, Arethas tells us that "there is an uninterrupted tradition in the church, that Enoch shall come with Elias the Tishbite, (for they shall both come to bear witness beforehand to those that are then living, that they may not be deceived by the seductive miracles of Antichrist,) and bear witness for the space of three years and a half."⁵

And to these might be added several other similar testimonies.

So that, as it respects the coming of Elias before our Lord's

¹ Item Enoch, qui ante diluvium Deo justus complacuit, et ideo de isto mundo in carnis sue natiuitate vivus translatus est in loco ubi Deus scit; ex quo loco in consummatione mundi innovari habet in hoc mundo, unde etiam translatus est, ad confundendum et revincendum antichristum. A quo interfecti martyria sua complebunt, viventes in eternum in secula seculorum. De Montibus Sina et Sion. Inter Cypr. Op. ed. Pamel. 1617. p. 290.

² Hoc ideo personæ sue deputat quia semper in necessitate fuit, persecutiones et pressuras ultra ceteros passus, sicut passus sunt Enoch et Elias, qui ultimo tempore futuri sunt apostoli. Mitti enim habent ante Christum ad preparandum populum Dei, et muniendas omnes ecclesias ad resistendum Antichristo, quos et persecutiones pati et occidi lectio apocalypsis testatur. PSEUDO-AMBROSIUS (said by some to be, Hilarius Diaconus) in Ep. la. ad Corinth. Inter Ambros. Op. tom. ii. Appendix Col. 125. ed. Ben.

³ Creduntur etiam redituri ad hanc vitam, et quod tamdiu dilatum est morituri. AUG. De Gen. ad lit. lib. ix. c. 6. Op. tom. iii. pt. 1 col. 247.

⁴ Ἀξίον δὲ καὶ ἡμῶς ζητῆσαι. Εἰ ὁ Ἀντίχριστος ἐρχεται καὶ ὁ Ἠλίας ἐρχεται, τίς ὅταν λέγῃται, ἔρχηται καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, τότε αὐτοῖς αἰνῶδος οὐδὲν ἐρίσεται; ταῦτα γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ μὴ εἶναι τὴν ἡμετέραν, τελευτήσαντα τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ. Chrysost. in Ep. la. ad Thess. c. 5. hom. 9. § 2. tom. xi. p. 488. 'Ὅτ' αὖ μιν γὰρ κτλ., ὅτι Ἠλίας μιν ἐρχεται καὶ ἀποκαταστήσει πάντα, αὐτὸν Ἠλίας ἔσθι. καὶ τὴν τότε ἐσθμινὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐπιστροφῇ' ὅτ' αὖ δὲ κτλ., ὅτι ὁ μέλλων ἐρχέσθαι κατὰ τοῦ τρόπου τῆς διακονίας Ἰωάννου Ἠλίας καλεῖται. . . . ὥστε γὰρ κληρὸς τῆς δωδεκάς ἐστὶν παρουσίας, οὕτως αὐτοῦ τῆς προτέρας ἐγένετο πρόδρομος. Ib. In Matt. xvii. 10, hom. 57. § 1. tom. vii. p. 577.

⁵ Καὶ ὅτι μιν Ἠλίας ἔξει ὁ πρῶτος διπλὸν, προαγορευσάσης τῆς γῆρας διὰ Μαθθαίον. . . . Πᾶσι δὲ τοῦ Εὐαγγ. μαρτυρίαν μιν ὅσοι πρὸς τὴν παρουσίαν αὐτοῦ τῆς γῆρας οὐκ ἔχοντες, καὶ τὸν

second advent, it is asserted by Huetius,¹ Maldonatus,² and Mede³ three as able witnesses as we could desire in such a case, it was declared by the unanimous consent of the Fathers; while Mr. Mede, though he "thinks that the opinion hath some matter of truth in it," adds, "as for Elias the Thibite's coming, I find *no ground at all but the contrary*,"⁴

Now, I would ask, Is this to be received as "revelation?"

With respect to Enoch particularly, I might ask, how this is to be reconciled with the declaration of Scripture, that Enoch *was translated that he should not see death*. (τοῦ μὴ ἰδεῖν θάνατον.) (Heb. xi. 5.) I might raise other difficulties to the reception of these statements. But I content myself with putting the question to my opponents; Do you yourselves feel bound to believe this as you would if you found it stated in Scripture? If not, then by that very fact you prove that you do not consider "catholic consent" in such points at least, as a *certain* witness of what the Apostles delivered.

(8.) The doctrine of the Fathers as to the absolute unlawfulness of an oath to a Christian.

Irenæus says, that our Lord "hath commanded us not only not to swear falsely, but not to swear at all."⁵

Justin Martyr, that he has commanded us "not to swear at all."⁶

So Clement of Alexandria says, that Plato's precept against an oath agrees with our Lord's prohibition of it.⁷

"I say nothing," says Tertulian, "respecting perjury, since it is not lawful even to swear."⁸

Basilides the martyr, when required to take an oath, affirmed that it was not lawful for him as a Christian to swear at all.⁹

δια μεταβολῆς ἀπαξιασθέντων. λόγος δὲ φησὶ καὶ παραδόσεις φησὶν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀπαρ-
τρεπτικῶς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔχουσι μετὰ Ἡλίου τοῦ Θεοδότου (ἔχουσι γὰρ αἱρετοὶ τρεπόμενα, τυραννοῦντες τοὺς
οὐκοί τὸτε μὴ τοὺς ἀκατάβολοι τοῦ Ἀντιχριστοῦ παραγοῦναι σήμερις) καὶ τὴν διὰ μαρτυρίαν
ταῦτα τρέφονται χρονοὶ τριτοῦ καὶ ἡμιότου. ΑἰΡΕΤΗ. c. 30. Comm. in Apoc. c. 11.
pp. 743, 4. ed. 1631.

¹ Constantis est Patrum omniumque consensu probatissima et receptissima Ecclesie opinio. Not. in Orig. Comm. in Matt. tom. xiii. In Op. Orig. tom. iii. p. 572.

² In Matth. xi. 14.

³ Works, pp. 98, 9.

⁴ Ib. p. 99.

⁵ Non solum non perjurare sed nec jurare præcepit. IREN. Adv. hær. lib. ii. c. 32. ed. Mase. c. 56. p. 187. ed. Grab.

⁶ Περὶ δὲ τοῦ μὴ μνηστὶ ὅλως, ταλὴν δὲ λέγει αὐ, οὕτως παρακαλοῦνται καὶ ὁμοσπύτι ὅλως,
καὶ τ. λ. Apol. i. § 16. ed. Ben. p. 53. (Col. 1688. Apol. 2. p. 63.)

⁷ Τὴν περὶ τοῦ ὁμοσπύτι ἀπαγορεύσιν ἐνταῦθα ἰδὲ καὶ τὸ διὰ τοῦ Νουμῶν λέγει, Ἐκείνους δὲ
ὁμοσπύτι περὶ πάντων ἀποσπᾶται. Strom. lib. v. p. 707. ed. Potter, (al. p. 596.) See also
his Pædag. lib. iii. c. 11. p. 299. (al. 255.)

⁸ Tacito de perjurio, quando ne jurare quidem liceat. De Idol. c. 11. p. 91.

⁹ Μὴ ὄμναι αὐτὰ τοῖς παρὰ πάντας ἡμιότους διαβάλλονται, χρονοῖαν γὰρ ὑπαρχόν. EUSEB.
Hist. Eccl. lib. vi. c. 5.

Cyprian affirms, that Christians are not to take an oath,¹ and comforts them in the prospect of death, on the ground that if they lived they might be obliged to take an oath, which was not lawful.²

Origen expounds our Lord's precept in the same way.³

Lactantius says, that the Christian will not swear at all;⁴

Eusebius, that the Christian has learnt from Christ not to swear at all;⁵

Basil says that an oath is altogether forbidden in the Gospel,⁶ and of Gregory Thaumaturgus he tells us, that "he avoided oaths, not going beyond yea and nay, on account of the command of Christ, who says, 'I say unto you, swear not at all.'"⁷

Epiphanius says, that our Lord, in Matt. v. 34, ordained that it is not lawful to swear, either by the Lord or by any other oath; for it is wicked to swear;⁸ and that the Christian religion requires us not to swear either truly or falsely, but to say yea, yea, nay, nay.⁹

Chrysostom speaks at large to the same effect, in his homily on Matt. v. 27—37, saying, that it was allowed in the Law of Moses, only "on account of the infirmity of those who received the Law;"¹⁰ and elsewhere he says,—“Let the Christians altogether avoid oaths, attending to the saying of Christ . . . [Matt. v. 34.] . . . Let no one therefore tell me, 'I swear in a just cause,' for it is not lawful to swear, either in a just or unjust cause."¹¹ And again, in a still more remarkable passage,—“But if you reverence nothing else, yet at least reverence the book which you

¹ Non jurandum. Testim. ad Quirin. lib. iii. test. 12. p. 218 ad. 1617.

² Compelleris jurare quod non licet. De mortal. prope init. ed. Pamel. 1617. p. 174.

³ Vetuit omnino jurare. Comment. Series in Matt. § 17. Op. vol. iii. p. 842. Repeated ib. § 110. p. 910. ed. Bened.

⁴ Hic non pejerabit, ne Deum ludibrio habeat; sed ne jurabit quidem. Div. Inst. Epit. c. 6. p. 506. ed. Cant. 1685.

⁵ Το μηδεν ευρκιας δεσθαι, πολλου γε δε επιτοκειν, δια το προς αυτου μαθαναι μηδε ομνυναι ολας. Præp. Evang. lib. i. c. 4. p. 12. ed. Col. 1688. See also his Demonst. Evang. lib. i. c. 6. p. 23.

⁶ Εν τω Ευαγγελιω πανταυς απηγορευται. Hom. Prim. in Psalm. xiv. § 5. ed. Ben. tom. i. App. p. 356. See also his Epist. 199. Amphiloch. Can. 29. tom. iii. p. 294.

⁷ Ερωγα τους ορκους η καθαρα εκνη ψυχη, . . . αρκουμην τι ναι και τι ου, δια το προσταγμα του Κυριου του υιοτερος, κ. τ. λ. Epist. 207. ad cler. Neocæs. § 4. tom. 3. p. 312.

⁸ Θεσπισαι τον Κυριον, . . . παντος μιν ουν, οτι ου δε ομνυνται, ουτε αυτον τον Κυριον ουτε αλλον τινα ορκον του γενοσιν ουτι το ομνυναι. Hæc. 19. Ossen. § 6. tom. i. p. 44. ed. Par. 1622.

⁹ Μη ομνυναι ορκον, μητε εν αληθεια, μητε εν ψευδι αλλα ναι, ναι, και ου, ου λεγειν. Hæc. 58. Cathar. § 7. p. 499.

¹⁰ Της ασθενειας των δεχμενων της νομου. Hom. 17. in Matt. § 5. tom. vii. p. 229. See the whole of §§ 5, 6, 7. pp. 228—233.

¹¹ Τους ορκους δε πανταυς φυλαττω ακουσαν της απεφασιας του Χριστου . . . Matt. v. 34.] . . . Μη τινυν μοι λεγει, οτι επι δικαιο ομνυμι ουκ εξιστι γαρ ουτε επι δικαιο ουτε επι αδικα ομνυναι. Hom. 15. in Genes. ii. 20. § 5. tom. iv. p. 122.

hold out to swear by, and open the gospel which you take into your hands, and command men to swear by; and having heard what Christ there says respecting oaths, be alarmed and desist. . . I do not weep and lament so much at hearing of men being murdered in the highways, as I weep and lament, and am horror-struck, when I see a man approaching to this table, and placing his hands upon it, and touching the gospel, and taking an oath. When you are about to adjure any one, restrain thyself, and prevent it, and say to him who is about to swear, What shall I do to you? God hath commanded me not to adjure; he now restrains me. This is sufficient, both for the honour of the Lawgiver, and for thy safety, and to inspire fear into him who is about to swear. For when he sees that we thus fear to adjure others, he will be much more afraid to swear rashly.”

Jerome says,—“This [i. e. to swear by God] had been allowed by the Law as to children, that as they sacrificed victims to God that they might not offer them to idols, so they might be permitted to swear by God, not because they might properly do this, but because it was better to swear by God than by devils. But the truth of the gospel does not admit of an oath.”

“We find,” says Theodoret, “in those laws [i. e. the Gospel] that he who swears, though he swears truly, is a partaker of the devil’s portion.” And again; “The old Law forbids a falsehood, but the new even an oath.” And again,—“Our Saviour, making laws respecting oaths, forbids oaths altogether, saying that yea and nay suffice for a confirmation of what is said.”

¹ Σὺ δὲ κ' ἔπειτα, αὐτὸ γούτο βιβλίον ἀνέσθης ὁ πρότερος με ὁρκῶ, καὶ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ὃ μετὰ χήρας λαμβάνων καλῶς ὁμιλεῖται, ἀναπτύξῃ, καὶ ἀποδείξῃς τί περὶ ὁρκῶν ὁ Χριστὸς κ' ἀπαγορεύει, φησὶν καὶ ἀποστήθῃ. . . Οὐχ οὕτω στήνῃ καὶ δακρυῶ σφίγγοντας κλονῶν τίνας ἢ τὰς ἰδίας, ὡς στήνῃ, καὶ δακρυῶ καὶ φρίττῃ, ἐπιδὲν ἴδῃ τίνα πλῆσιον τῆς τραπέζης ταύτης ἐλθόντα, καὶ τὰς χήρας θύγα, καὶ τὸν εὐαγγέλιον ἀφαιρῶν καὶ ὁμιλοῦντα. . . Ἐπιδὲν μὲν τίνα ὁρκίζῃ, ἐπιστῆς σταντοῖ, καὶ καλυτοῖ, καὶ ὑπὸ πρὸς τοῖς μάλιστα ὁμιλεῖται, Ἴτι σοὶ ποίνῃ; ὁ Θεὸς ἐκλυτοῖ μὴ ὁρκίζῃ ὡς καὶ ἐμὴ κατέχῃ τὸν. Ἀρκὴ τούτου καὶ ὡς τιμὴν τοῦ νομοθετήσαντος, καὶ ὡς ἀσφαλεῖν σὴν, καὶ ὡς φόβον τοῦ μολοῦτος ὁμιλεῖται. Ὅταν γὰρ κινῶν ἴδῃ, ὅτι ὁρκίζῃ ἱερούς οὕτω δίδωσθαι, πολλὰ μάλιστα αὐτοῖς ὁμοῖαι προπτὸς φοβήσονται. Homil. 15. Ad pop. Antioch. De Statistis. § 5. tom. ii. p. 159.

² Hoc quasi parvulis fuerat Lege concessum, ut quomodo victimas immolabant-Deo, ne eas idolis immolarent: sic et jurare permitterentur in Deum: non quod recte hac facerent, sed quod melius esset Deo id exhibere quam demonibus. Evangelica autem veritas non recipit juramentum. In Matt. lib. i. c. 6. vv. 34, et sec. Tom. vii. col. 30. ed. Ven. 1769. See also his Comm. in Zech. c. 8. vv. 16, 17. Tom. 6. col. 850.

³ Εὐριστομένη π' ὁμοῖος τοῖς νόμοις. . . τοῖς ὁμινοῖται, καὶ ἀναθῶν ὁμινοῖται, τῆς διαβολικῆς οὕτα συμμορίας. Quæst. in Genes. q. 37. Op. ed. Schulze, 1769. tom. i. p. 48.

⁴ Ὁ μὲν παλαιὸς ἀπαγορεύων τὸ ἵκεν, ὃ δ' ἡ γὰρ τοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὁρκῶν. Hæret. Fab. lib. v. c. 16. tom. iv. p. 435.

⁵ Περὶ ὁρκῶν νόμοις τῶν, καὶ αὐτοῖς ἀπαγορεύων τοῖς ὁρκῶν, ἀποχρηστὸν γάρ τὸ Ναι, καὶ το Ὀυ, πρὸς τὴν τὴν λογισμῶν βιβλίωσιν. Græc. Affect. Cur. disp. ix. tom. iv. p. 946. See also his Dialog. 1. Immutabilis, tom. iv. p. 34. and Ep. 78. tom. iv. p. 1134.

Lastly, it is said in the Acts of the Council of Constantinople, under Flavianus, in 448, that "we have been commanded by our Saviour Christ not to swear."¹

Now I would ask both the Romanists and our opponents, whether on account of this consentient testimony of the Fathers they consider themselves *bound* to believe this doctrine, and interpret Scripture accordingly, or whether they do not consider themselves at perfect liberty, as far as that testimony is concerned, to admit or reject it, and whether they have not in fact wholly rejected it. If so, then it clearly appears that practically they admit this consentient testimony where they like it, and reject it where they dislike it, dealing with it in fact as with any other determination of "a number" of fallible men. Away, then, with their pretence of considering themselves *bound* to interpret the Scriptures according to the unanimous testimony of the Fathers. If their notion is good for anything, it is a principle by which we must abide, and receive all things so proved. But if they themselves reject this testimony when it displeases them, it is deceiving men to tell them that they are *bound* to believe this or that doctrine or interpretation of Scripture because there is a consentient testimony of the Fathers in its favour, when there are other doctrines and interpretations, having the same support, which they themselves either wholly disbelieve, or at least hold doubtful.

(4.) Standing at prayer on Sundays, and during the period between Easter and Whitsuntide.

The author of the "Questions and answers to the orthodox," in the works of Justin Martyr, gives the following question and answer: "Why on Sundays, and from Easter to Whitsuntide, do they not kneel when praying? And whence was this custom introduced into the churches?" The answer is, that we are to stand at those times, as a sign of the resurrection; and it is added, that "the custom commenced from Apostolical times, as the blessed Irenæus, martyr, and bishop of Lyons, says."²

Now let us hear Tertullian;—"We account it a *crime* to kneel at prayer on a Sunday."³

Lastly, we have the determination of the great Council of

¹ Ερτοταται ἡμιν παρὰ τοῦ Σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ μὴ ὀμνῆσαι. Acta Concil. Constant. Act. 1. Inter Act. Conc. Chalc. Concil. tom. iv.

² Διὰ τί οὐ ταῖς κυριακαῖς ἵμαραι, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πάσχα ἕως τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ἵστου οὐ κλινόμεν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς; πῶς δὲ καὶ ἡ τοιαυτὴ ἐν ταῖς ἀκκλησίαις πολλὰ συνήθεια; . . . Ἐκ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν χρόνων ἡ τοιαυτὴ συνήθεια ἔλαβεν τὴν ἀρχὴν καθὼς φησὶ ὁ μακάριος ἱερωμάρτυς καὶ ἐπίσκοπος Λαυδουναίου. Quæst. 115. Inter Op. Just. Mart. ed. Ben. pp. 489, 90.

³ Die Dominico jejunium nefas ducimus, vel de geniculis adorare. Tertull. De Cor. Mil. c. 3. p. 102. ed. 1664.

Nice;—"Since there are some who kneel on the Sunday and at Whitsuntide, in order that all things may be observed alike in every diocese, the Holy Synod decrees that they shall offer their prayers to God standing."¹

Can our opponents get better testimony in the Fathers to the apostolicity and the *importance* of any custom of the primitive church than we have here?" But the Romanists themselves have wholly rejected this custom.

(5) The threefold immersion in baptism, which is witnessed to by Tertullian,² Jerome,³ Cyril of Jerusalem,⁴ Ambrose,⁵ and writings passing under the names of Dionysius Areopagita,⁶ Athanasius,⁷ Augustine,⁸ and Basil.⁹

(6) Infant communion, or the giving of the eucharist to infants.

On this point I need only refer to the learned work of Mr. Bingham on the antiquities of the Christian church, who has fully given the authorities on this subject, and whose opinion is, that "it is beyond dispute" that this was the practice of the church for many ages, and esteemed to be necessary by divine command;¹⁰ and even the Romanist Maldonat, in the face of an opposite decision of the Council of Trent, "asserts roundly that the antients, and particularly St. Austin and Pope Innocent, did believe that infants could not be saved without partaking of the eucharist," and that this was the practice of the church for the first six centuries.¹¹

And hence Bishop Stillingfleet, after noticing the points which had been adduced by his Romish antagonist, as instances of cases in which we depend upon "tradition" for the knowledge

¹ Επειδὴ τινες ἀπὸ τῆ κυριακῆ ἡμέρας ἐκκλινόντες, καὶ ἐν ταῖς τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ἡμέραις, ὑπὲρ τοῦ παντὸς ἐν πάσῃ παρακλήσει ὁμοίως φιλαλληλεῖν, ἰσχυρῶς ἀρξάμενοι τὴν ἀρχαίαν συνήθειαν ταύτην ἀποθνήσκουσιν τῷ Θεῷ. Can. xx. Justell. Cod. tom. i. p. 34.

² De Cor. Mil. c. 3. p. 102.

³ Adv. Lucifer. § 8. Op. tom. ii. col. 180. ed. Vall. Venet.

⁴ Cat. Mystag. ii. p. 286. ed. Milles.

⁵ De Sacram. lib. ii. c. 7.

⁶ De eccles. hierarch. c. 2.

⁷ Quæst. in Psalm q. 92. tom. ii. p. 327.

⁸ Serm. 40. In App. (al. De temp. 201.) tom. v. App. col. 79.

⁹ De Spir. Sanct. c. 27. tom. iii. p. 55.

¹⁰ Bk. xv. c. 4. § 7.

¹¹ BINGHAM'S Antiq. ib. See also ZORNII Historia Eucharist. infant. c. xi. § 3. et passim. MORTON'S Cath. App. ii. 25. § 10. p. 325. DALL. De usu Patr. i. 8. WHITBY Dissert. de §. 8. interpret. sec. Patr. pp. 212, &c. in Joh. vi. 53. WATERLAND has attempted to show that Augustine could not have considered it absolutely necessary, but seems to me only to prove that some other passages of his works appear somewhat inconsistent with such a notion, which however, cannot outweigh his clear statements on this subject. (See Waterlands Works vol. ix. pp. 473, &c.) See Daille and Zornius, c. 12. § 2.

of them, and which I need hardly say, are most of them the same that are relied upon by our opponents, as infant baptism, the observance of the Lord's Day, &c., which the bishop shows are sufficiently deducible from Scripture, adds,—“But methinks an author who would seem so much versed in Augustine, might, among all these instances, have found out one more, which would have looked more like a doctrinal tradition than most of these, which is *the necessity of the eucharist to baptized infants*. The places are so many and so express in him concerning it, that it would be a needless task to produce them. I shall only, therefore, refer you to your Espenæus (*De Eucharist. ad Orat. l. ii. c. 12.*) who hath made some collection of them. When you have viewed them, I pray bethink yourself of some convenient answer to them, which either must be by asserting that S. Augustine might be deceived in judging of doctrinal and apostolical traditions, and then to what purpose are your eight instances out of him? or else that might be accounted an apostolical tradition in one age which may not in another . . . which leaves us in a greater dispute than ever what these apostolical traditions are, when the church in several ages doth so much differ concerning them.”¹

Now with respect to all those points we have mentioned, I would ask any impartial reader whether the testimonies we have quoted are not at least as good evidence of patristical consent for them as the Tractators are accustomed to rely upon, and as can practically be obtained for any doctrine, interpretation, or practice.

Again, then, I ask our opponents, Do they hold that we must receive them? Will they affirm that these are part of the “precious Apostolical relics? If not, how are we to find such relics?

But if it be said that these are not vital points, and therefore that even consent of Fathers is not sufficient to establish any thing respecting them, then let it be clearly understood that consent of Fathers is only a valid proof of Apostolical tradition in matters of vital moment and fundamental importance, which will cut off a large number of Mr. Keble's “precious apostolical relics,” especially the *new* ones to which he has alluded, when he intimates that he may be “so happy as to *find* more” than those hitherto brought to light.

And if it must be first determined whether a point is of fundamental importance or not, before we can trust even the testimony of a whole host of Fathers, then how is this to be known but by Scripture telling us that this or that doctrine is necessary, and so informing us of the very point in question; for I suppose

¹ Rational Account, &c. pp. 166, 7.

it can hardly be left to the Fathers to determine what is and is not necessary and fundamental, or at any rate if it is, I know not where we are to find their decision upon the point; and if our opponents refer us to the formulæ they have given as "the Creed," or "Rule of Faith," as containing the complete list of fundamentals, then (not to repeat the objections we have already urged against such a notion¹) we get from the earliest Fathers a list of fundamentals, comprising less than is contained in "the Apostles' creed;" and moreover, the assurance that all the points thus enumerated are clearly and plainly laid down in Scripture. And if we seek to get beyond even the LETTER of this brief elementary summary of the faith, we shall find the Fathers all at variance on the highest points.

There is one more remark, also, which I would make upon the reply (if offered) that catholic consent is not, in such points as these, a sufficient proof of *Apostolical tradition*; which is this, that this admission annihilates the best, if not the only ground, upon which such consent is put forward as a proof of Apostolical tradition *in any case*, viz., that such consent proves a common origin for the doctrine so delivered, and that it was derived from a quarter to which the whole church looked up for instruction. It is said, how can we account for such consent, but by supposing that the doctrine was originally delivered by those from whom the whole church learnt the faith? This argument, then, is as valid for the points we have just been considering, as for the highest points of faith. If "consent," as it is called, proves derivation from the Apostles in one case, so does it in the other; and though the points are of very different importance, yet if they are both the subjects of "revelation," they have an equal claim to our belief, as the Word of God.

It is, therefore, justly remarked by Bishop Taylor,—“It is not excuse enough to say that singly the Fathers may err, but if they concur, they are certain testimony; for there is no question this day disputed by persons that are willing to be tried by the Fathers, so generally attested on either side, as some points are, which both sides dislike severally or conjunctly; and therefore it is *not honest* for either side to press the authority of the Fathers as a concluding argument in matter of dispute; unless themselves will be content to submit in all things to the testimony of an equal number of them, which I am certain neither side will do.”²

¹ See pp. 124 et seq. above.

² Lib. of Proph. § 8.

SECTION IX.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRACTATORS FOUNDED UPON SUPPOSITIONS WHICH ARE CONTRADICTED BY FACTS.

The system of our opponents rests upon two hypotheses;—*First*, That there was a steady permanent successional delivery, from one to another, for several ages, *throughout the whole catholic church*, of all the important doctrines of Christianity, derived from the oral teaching of the Apostles, and in which the teaching of all in communion with that church agreed;—*Secondly*, that the whole catholic church was so united together as one body, and discipline so rigidly enforced throughout it, that no parts or individuals belonging to it could publicly maintain any errors of importance, without being excommunicated, or at least censured, by the church, and so as that such censure must have come down to us.

These two propositions are tacitly assumed by our opponents, and are, in fact, the foundation upon which their system rests; but both of them will be found, upon investigation, to be contrary to facts. They are the *πρωτα ψευδη*, the primary false principles upon which their arguments are founded.

In reply to them, I shall endeavour to show,—

First, That from the very beginning there were many heresies, errors, and false doctrines prevalent among the professed followers of Christ; and *secondly*, that such errors were maintained and propagated among those who formed what was called the catholic church.

Our Lord has aptly compared his nominal church to a field in which tares and wheat grow together; and such he tells us, will be its character, even to the end; for he forbids his angels to separate them, lest they might inadvertently or by mistake root out or injure the wheat. Both are to grow together until the harvest. Such, then, is the state of the nominal Christian church. It contains within it tares sown by Satan, intermingled with the wheat, the produce of the good seed, who are alone in reality the children of the kingdom. And I suppose it will readily be admitted, that the tares represent as much those that maintain false doctrine, as those that are involved in corrupt practice.

But was it so, it may be asked, from the beginning? Was there not a time when the church contained wheat only? The Apostolical Scriptures clearly prove that, even when they were being written, the tares were already mingled with the wheat; the tares not merely of orthodox but inconsistent professors, but also of men altogether unsound in the faith; and that too, among the professed teachers of the faith.

There were, from the very first, "false Apostles," (2 Cor. xi. 13.); there were those that preached "another gospel," and "perverted the gospel of Christ; and so successfully, as to draw over the Galatians to their doctrines, (Gal. i. 6, 7.); there were "false brethren, unawares brought in," (Gal. ii. 4.); there were some who "preached Christ, of envy and strife;" whose doctrine, therefore, as derived from anything but divine teaching, would vary with the prejudices of the preacher, (Phil. i. 15.); there were even among the brethren "enemies of the cross of Christ." (Phil. iii. 18.) Still more, there were those whose teaching was calculated to "spoil" Christians, "through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (Col. ii. 8.) There were those who would forge letters in the name of an Apostle, to promote their views. (2 Thess. ii. 2.) In fact, "the mystery of iniquity" was "already working." (2 Thess. ii. 7.) "Some, having swerved, had turned aside unto vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed." (1 Tim. i. 6, 7.) There were those who, "concerning faith, had made shipwreck," and "blasphemed." (1 Tim. i. 19, 20.) There were those that addicted themselves to "profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so called," and had, consequently, "erred concerning the faith." (1 Tim. vi. 20, 21. See also vv. 4, 5.) There were those that taught that the resurrection was then already past. (2 Tim. ii. 18.) There were "many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers," who "subverted whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." (Tit. i. 10, 11.) There were those who, when they "ought to have been teachers, had need that one should teach them again which were the first principles of the oracles of God." (Heb. v. 12.) There were "unlearned and unstable" persons, who wrested the Scriptures unto their own destruction. (2 Pet. iii. 16.) There were already "many false prophets gone out into the world," and the people were to "try the spirits whether they were of God;" for which St. John gave them—not a direction to follow the catholic church or catholic consent, or submit themselves to certain earthly guides—but a doctrinal test. (1 John iv. 2; and see 2 John, 7—10.)

Such was the condition of the church, even in the Apostolical times; and the warnings given on this point with respect to the future are clear and decisive. "I know this," says St. Paul to the elders of Ephesus, "that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. *Also of your own selves shall men arise*, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts xx. 30.) "There were false prophets also among the people" [of the Jews], says St. Peter,

"even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." (2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.)

That these prophetic announcements, moreover, were fully accomplished, even in the next generation after the Apostles, we have very decisive evidence.

Thus we are told by Eusebius, that Ignatius, when on his way to Rome to suffer martyrdom, (where he was put to death about the year 116,) admonished the churches of Asia, as he passed through, "to take especial heed of the heresies that were then first springing up and increasing."¹

So Papias, who flourished in the year 110, intimates that there were those in his time who delivered strange and spurious precepts.²

Again, Hegesippus, who flourished about the year 170, and is said by Eusebius to have been in the first succession after the Apostles,³ and by Jerome to have bordered on the Apostles' times,⁴ tells us (according to Eusebius) that until the time of Trajan⁵ the church remained a pure and uncorrupt virgin, those that endeavoured to corrupt the wholesome doctrine of the gospel of salvation, if there were any, remaining till then concealed; but when the sacred company of the Apostles were in different ways extinct, and the generation of those who had been thought worthy to hear the words of divine wisdom with their own ears had passed away, then the conspiracy of impious error took its rise through the deceit of false teachers, who, inasmuch as not one of the Apostles was left, openly and confidently attempted to inculcate their miscalled knowledge in opposition to the preaching of the truth.⁶

¹ Εἰ πρώτοις πολλοὶς προφυλαττέσθαι τὰς αἵρεσις, ἅρτι τότε πρώτοι ἀναφύσας καὶ ἐπιπολαζούσας παρῆναι. EUSEB. Hist. Eccl. iii. 36.

² Τὰς ἀλλοτρίας ἠτολμᾶς μνησθῆναι. EUSEB. Hist. Eccl. iii. c. ult.

³ Ἐπὶ τῆς πρώτης τῶν Ἀποστόλων γῆρατος διαδύχης. Ib. ib. ii. 23.

⁴ Vicinus Apostolicorum temporum. De Script. c. 22.

⁵ Dr. Routh thinks that the words of Hegesippus refer to even an earlier period than the times of Trajan. See his Reliq. SS. Patr. vol. i. pp. 233, 4.

⁶ For this passage we are indebted to Eusebius, who speaking of Hegesippus says, Ὁ αὐτὸς ἀνὴρ διηγοῖμενος τὰ κατὰ τοὺς διουμνίους, ἐτίθει καὶ ἀπὸ μέρους τῶν τότε χρόνων παρόντος καθαῖρα καὶ ἀδιαφόρος ἡμῖν ἡ Ἐκκλησία, ὅτι ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ σπυρίου φαλκισμένη ἦσαν τότε τῶν, καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, παραφθορῆς ἐπιχρῶντων τῶν οὐκ ἐκ τῆς καθάρου τοῦ σωτηρίου κλημάτων. καὶ δὲ ὁ ἴδιος τῶν Ἀποστόλων χορὸς διαφόροις μαθήταις τοῦ κυρίου τότε, παρελθόντες ἐπὶ τῇ γεννῇ καὶ τῶν αὐταῖς ἀκούσας τῆς ὁδοῦ σοφίας ἐπακούσαν κατὰ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, τὴν κατὰ τῆς αἵας πλάνης τὴν ἀρχὴν λαμβάνειν ἢ συστάσει, διὰ τῆς τῶν ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσκαλῶν ἀπάτης. οἱ καὶ αὐτοὶ μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τῶν Ἀποστόλων λατομῶν, ὅμοιοι λαοὶ καὶ τῇ κεφαλῇ, τῶν τῆς ἀληθείας κλημάτων τὴν ψυδαίνουσαν γῆσιν ἀντικρυττῶν ἐπὶ τῶν. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iii. 32. The Romish edi-

One single century therefore had hardly passed away after our Lord's crucifixion, before the church became afflicted with heresies and errors still more openly avowed and propagated than in the times of the Apostles. For when Hegesippus here speaks of the church having remained a virgin till the time of Trajan, the passages of Scripture quoted above clearly show that he must be understood as speaking *comparatively*, and not as denying that corruptions existed therein before, or otherwise he is clearly contradicted by those passages; from which also we may correct the statements of Firmilian and others, who, for the support of their respective hypotheses, have maintained that the heretics were all posterior to the times of the Apostles. "Whatsoever," says Dr. Routh, "Firmilian may say to the contrary in his Epistle to Cyprian, it is well known that some heresies, and such as even separated from the communion of the church, existed before the Apostles were dead, certainly before the death of the Apostle John. (See 1 John ii. 19; Jude 19; Rev. ii. 6, 15.)" And therefore, as the same learned writer observes, all these authors are to be interpreted as meaning that the times of Trajan and Hadrian were fruitful in hæresiarchs, who acted much more boldly than those who went before them.¹ That the seeds of these heresies existed in the church in the times of the Apostles, and are alluded to in such passages as those we have quoted above, is distinctly maintained by Tertullian² and Irenæus.⁴

But, indeed, what can be plainer than the following statement of Jerome on this subject? "While," saith he, "the blood of Christ was yet but recently shed in Judæa, it was maintained, that the Lord's body was but an appearance; the Galatians drawn away to the observance of the Law were again begotten to spiritual life by the apostle; the Corinthians disbelieving the resurrection of the flesh were urged by many arguments to re-

tor of Eusebius, Valesius, being very much troubled with this passage, though he admits that Eusebius understood Hegesippus to be speaking of the church at large, has the face to assert that Eusebius was in this mistaken, and that Hegesippus was only speaking of the Church of Jerusalem, though we have nothing left us of Hegesippus but the few fragments that Eusebius has preserved. A similar passage of Hegesippus on the same subject is preserved to us by Eusebius in his 4th bk. c. 22. Some have supposed it to be the same passage as is here referred to, thinking thereby to curtail the passage given above; but if Eusebius is to be trusted, the passages were evidently not the same, and why should we suppose that there could not be two notices relating to the same matter in the five books of Hegesippus? The very passages we are now considering show that we should be wrong in such a supposition in the case of Eusebius, and why therefore might we not in that of Hegesippus?

1 Reliq. SS. Patr. vol. i. p. 234.

2 Ib.

3 De Præscr. hæret. c. 7 and c. 33.

4 Adv. hæret. lib. i. In præf.

turn to the true path. Then Simon Magus and Menander his disciple asserted themselves to be Powers of God. Then Basilides feigned his great God Abraxas with his three hundred and sixty-five forms. Then Nicolaus, *who was one of the seven deacons*, promulgated his impurities. I say nothing of the heretics of Judaism.

. . . . I come to those heretics who mangled the gospels; a certain Saturninus, and the Ophites, and Cainites, and Sethoites, and Carpocrates, and Cerinthus and his successor Ebion, and other pests, *most of whom broke forth during the life of the Apostle John.*" And in the Apocalypse of St. John, he points out as instances of *heretics* that, "To the angel of Ephesus there is imputed the loss of love. In the angel of the church of Pergamos the eating of things offered to idols and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans are blamed. Likewise in the case of the angel of the Thyatyreans, the prophetess Jezebel and the eating of things offered to images and fornications are rebuked."¹

Remarkable also is the testimony of Origen. Many of those who profess to believe in Christ," he says, "disagree not only in small points and those of no moment, but also in important points, and those of the highest moment."² And again, in a still more important passage; "I wish that those only who are without the church were deceived; it would be easy to avoid the seduction. But now they who profess to belong to the church are deceived and misled *even on the necessary points*, as their dissension is a witness, since even those who are within the church are misled.

. . . . It is bad to find any one erring in points of morals, but I think it is much worse to err in doctrines, and not to hold that *doctrine which is agreeable to the most true rule of the Scriptures* . . . Every one that is perfect . . . and that has his senses exercised for understanding the truth, will necessarily in his inquiries fall in with many doctrines opposed to one another,

¹ Adhuc apud Judæam Christi sanguine recenti, phantasma Domini corpus asserebatur; Galatas ad observationem Legis traductos Apostolos iterum paturis; Corinthios resurrectionem carnis non credentes pluribus argumentis ad verum iter trahere conatur. Tunc Simon Magus et Menander discipulus ejus Dei se asseruere Virtutes: tunc Basilides summum Deum *Abraxas* cum trecentis sexaginta quinque Editionibus commentatus est; tunc Nicolaus, qui unus de septem Diaconis fuit, die noctuque nuptias faciens, obscænos et auditu quoque erubescendos coitus somniavit. Taceo de Judaismi hæreticis . . . Ad eos venio hæreticos, qui Evangelia laniaverunt; Saturninum quemdam, et Ophitas et Cainas, et Sethoitas, et Carpocratem, et Cerinthus et hujus successorem Ebionem et cæteras pestes quorum plurimi vivente adhuc Joanne Apostolo eruperunt." "Angelo Ephesi deserta caritas imputatur. In angelo Pergamensæ Ecclesiæ idolothytorum esus et Nicolaitarum doctrina reprehenditur. Item apud Angelum Thyatyrorum Jezabel prophetissa et simulacrorum escæ et fornicationes increpantur." HIERONYMUS. Dialog. adv. Luciferian. §§ 23, 24. Tom. ii. col. 196—8.

² De Princip. lib. i. Præf. Ed. Ben. tom. i. p. 47.

and will hear many professing to know the truth and *different traditions respecting it*."¹

To which we may add the passages already quoted in a preceding page;² where he tells us that "from the very beginning there were differences among believers respecting the meaning of the books that were believed to be divine."

So also Dionysius of Corinth (who flourished a. 170) speaks of "some teachers" who, in their esteem for the works of Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, respecting the millennium, "despised the law and the prophets, and neglected to follow the gospels, and made light of the Epistles of the Apostles."³ And these we find from the context, were teachers in the catholic church.

Nay, we find that such a correct successional delivery of doctrine as our opponents suppose, was not found even in matters relating to the rites and practices of the church, where an alteration is so much less easy than in points of mere doctrine. As, for instance, in the observance of Easter, the varieties in which are attributed by Irenæus to some bishops not being so diligent as they ought, and *leaving that as a custom to those that came after them which had been introduced through simplicity and ignorance*.⁴

And we find Firmilian of Cæsarea, in the middle of the third century, charging the church of Rome with many such innovations, and telling them that they vainly pretended apostolical authority for them.⁵

And these corruptions, be it observed, must have been introduced at periods anterior to almost all the records we possess of the primitive church.

1 Utinam soli qui extra ecclesiam sunt seducerentur; facile erat cavere seductionem. Nunc autem ipsi qui profitentur se ecclesiasticos esse de necessariis quibusque capitulis falluntur et seducuntur, sicut ipsa dissensio eorum testimonium est, quoniam et qui intus sunt seducuntur; . . . Malum quidem est invenire aliquem secundum mores vitæ errantem, multo autem pejus arbitror esse in dogmatibus aberrare, et non secundum verissimam regulam scripturarum sentire. . . . Omnis qui perfectus est . . . et qui exercitatus habet sensus ad capiendum, necesse est ut querens et discutiens in multa incurrat dogmatum prælia, audiet etiam multos profitentes veritatem et diversas de ea traditiones. ORIGEN. In Matth. Comment. Series §§ 33, 35. Tom. iii. pp. 852, 853, 854.

² See p. 245 above.

³ Τῶν διδασκάλων τοῦ μὴ νόμου καὶ τοὺς προφῆτας το μὲν ἤκουσαν, καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους ἐπιστάς παρῆναι, καὶ τὰς τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐπιστολάς ἐκφαλλοσάντων. DIONYSIUS. Cor. in EUSEBIUS. Hist. Eccles. vii. 24.

⁴ Τῶν παρὰ τοὺς ἀγίους, ὡς μέγας, κρατούντων, τῇ καθ' ἀπλοῦντα καὶ ἡλιθιωμένοι συνδυαίει το μετεπειτα πτωχικότητα. ILLUS. Ep. ad Victor. in EUSEBIUS. Hist. Eccles. v. 24.

⁵ Eos autem qui Romæ sunt non ea in omnibus observare, quæ sint ab origine tradita, et frustra Apostolorum auctoritatem præstendere, scire quis etiam inde potest quod circa celebrandos dies paschæ, et circa multa alia divina rei sacramenta, videat esse apud illos aliquas diversitates, nec observari illis omnia æqualiter quæ Hierosolymis observantur. FIRMIANUS. Ep. ad Cypr. Inter Cypr. Ep. 75.

If, then, such changes could be so easily introduced in matters relating to the rites and usages of the church, and the innovations claim for themselves Apostolical tradition and authority, as was the case with those we have just mentioned, how much more easily might this be done in matters of mere doctrine. And when such innovations were widely spread, (and if they were corruptions suitable to the times or the bias of human nature, they were sure to spread quickly,) then the remains of purer doctrine or practice were proportionably condemned, and as far as possible extirpated. It needs no great acquaintance with history or human nature to see how easily such corruptions might spread in the church.

To inquire at large into the causes leading to such corruptions would here be out of place, where we are principally concerned with facts. But we may just observe that there were many such. One of the most fruitful sources of such corruptions was the philosophizing spirit of learned heathen converts, who looked upon the simple truths of divine revelation as they would upon the oracles of Pythagoras, of that which was plain making mysteries suitable to their own imaginations, and, resolving that to them there should be no mysteries, boldly declaring the meaning of everything really mysterious or but partially revealed. Another was a love in many for those oral reports of Apostolical tradition which in the earliest age of the church were of course abundant. Instances of erroneous notions which thus became prevalent have already been given in a former part of this chapter. Another was the influence of individuals who, from their eloquence or any other cause, became celebrated throughout the church. Who can calculate the mischief which must have been caused in the church by the wild and unorthodox notions of Origen, who in his time was looked up to as a prodigy throughout the church? The early church, accustomed to look up to the Apostles for guidance, seems afterwards to have been too much inclined to allow eminent individuals to take their place and to follow human guidance. Such indeed is the natural disposition of men in general. They want a leader, a great name, under which to enlist themselves. One is of Paul, another of Apollos, another of Cephas. Hence the almost incredible effect which may be produced by one or two able, zealous, and influential individuals, nay even by one, witness Augustine; a truth to which Mr. Keble himself has borne testimony;¹ and to such influences the early church was of course much more exposed than we are at this day. And one great cause of this, as far as doctrine is concerned, is that men are not satisfied with what is delivered in

1. Pref. to Hooker, p. liv.

1. Pref. to Hooker, p. liv.

the Scriptures. However clear and plain the Word of God may be in all vital points, it is not sufficiently full and distinct in its revelations to satisfy the *curiosity* of man; and hence in all ages men have been anxious to be wise above what is written, the fruitful source of most of the heresies with which the church of Christ has been afflicted.

The authorities above cited, then, show that from the very beginning errors of various kinds gradually crept into the church, and that complaints of such corruptions are to be found in the earliest records of the primitive church we possess.

True, such corruptions cannot reasonably be supposed to have been universally received throughout the church, but nevertheless we know that their effects were in some cases widely felt and they cannot but operate in all impartial and judicious minds to the prejudice of what comes to us on the authority of a few individuals. It is both unfair and unwise to demand assent to such testimony as a certain and infallible record of the faith of the whole catholic church and the oral teaching of the Apostles.

And were we to pursue the inquiry further, so as to include the fourth and fifth centuries, we should find the progress of error still greater, and more fatal in its effects. So far are those centuries from presenting to us, as the Tractators have intimated, a perfect model of the Christian church, that during them the church was given up as a body to one of the worst heresies by which it has yet been afflicted, namely, Arianism:¹ contradicting herself on this point, in the two most General Councils we read of in ecclesiastical history;² to say nothing of those numerous other heresies by which so many of her members were misled; and even those that remained orthodox, are found countenancing divers errors, far removed from the spirit of the gospel; as, for instance, the lawfulness of persecution, and the forced celibacy of the clergy.

It forms, indeed, one of the strongest arguments against the peculiarities of the Romish system, that they are almost all, if not all, doctrines so new and corrupt, that not even among the incorrect and unorthodox statements to be found scattered among the works of the Fathers, or the errors which began to *pervade* the whole church in the fourth and fifth centuries, can they find any substantial evidence in their favour.³

And this leads me to the second point, viz., to show more distinctly,

¹ See Hieron. adv. Lucifer.; Liberii Epist. ad Ursac. Valent. et Germ. in Oper. Hilarii Pict. Fragm. 6 col. 1338, 9, et Ep. ad Vincent. ibid. col. 1340; Gregor. Nazianz. orat. 21; Vinc. Lir. c. 6.

² See p. 155, 156, and 276, 277, above.

³ See Jewell's famous challenge to the Romanists, in his sermon.

Secondly, That such errors were from the beginning maintained and propagated among those who formed what was called the catholic church.

The notion that what was called "the catholic church" was always so united together as one body, and discipline so rigidly enforced throughout it, that no communities or individuals belonging to it could publicly maintain any errors of importance, without being excommunicated, or at least censured, by a judgment of the whole church, and so as that censure must have come down to us, is one altogether contradicted by facts.

We may find a proof of this, even in the Apostolical churches mentioned in Scripture. Thus St. Jude, in his Catholic Epistle, warns the churches, that there were "certain men crept in unawares;" "ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," that were "spots in their feasts of charity, when they feasted with them;" words which show that they were in the communion of the churches, (Jude vv. 4, 12.) Again, in the church of Pergamos, there were those that held the doctrine of Balaam, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, (Rev. ii. 14, 15.); in the church of Thyatira, whose "works, and charity, and service, and faith and patience are praised, the false prophetess, Jezebel, was suffered to teach, and to seduce the servants of God. (Rev. ii. 19, 20, 24.) Sardis, though enjoying the same "name and pretensions to spiritual life" as the others, as an Apostolical church, was, *as a church, dead*; and had but "a few" faithful servants of God. (Rev. iii. 1, 4.) Laodicea, an Apostolical church in name, like all the rest, was altogether corrupt, spiritually "poor, and *blind*, and naked." (Rev. iii. 14—18.) Once more; over the church in which Gaius was, to whom St. John addressed his third Epistle, presided Diotrephes; and of him and his conduct, the Apostle says,—“I wrote to the Church, but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not . . . and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and *casteth them out of the church*.” (3 John 9, 10.)

Now suppose a man who had never enjoyed the benefit of personal converse with the Apostles, endeavouring, some fifty years only after their death, to ascertain the orthodox doctrine, by the testimony of "the church." It will, of course, be admitted,—as, indeed, it is a known fact,—that the heretics generally pleaded as much for their doctrine being Apostolical, as the orthodox did. The passages above quoted, indeed, would alone prove that they endeavoured to shelter themselves under the authority of the Apostles. And by this time such churches as Sardis, Laodicea and that over which Diotrephes presided, spiri-

tually *alive in name*, and spiritually *dead in fact*, would naturally have increased; for here are three specifically pointed out to us in the Scriptures that became so, even under the very eye and superintendence of the Apostles. Now I beg to ask, how is the enquirer to determine which are the Laodicean, and which the orthodox churches? For mark, *here is an end at once to the notion of there being catholic consent in all important points in all the Apostolical churches*. There has evidently been no such thing, even from a period previous to the death of the Apostles. What, then, would have been his best and only sufficient test to judge by, in the absence of the only inspired teachers of the faith? Would he not naturally say, Have the Apostles left any written record of the faith behind them? Yes, would be the reply, Here is a large and full record of the faith, acknowledged, with hardly an exception worth naming, as authoritative, on all sides. What will a wise man, *individually responsible to God for embracing the true faith*, do under such circumstances? Will he not take those Scriptures into his hands, and by a diligent perusal of them, united with prayer for the promised guidance of that Divine Spirit that indited them, judge by them what is the true faith, and which the true followers of Christ?

As time passed on, such a course would be still more necessary; for as we see, from the passages already adduced under the former head, the supporters of false doctrine within the catholic church progressed with the advance of time in boldness and in numbers. "I wish," says Origen, "that those only who are without the church were deceived; it would be easy to avoid the seduction. But now they who profess to belong to the church are deceived and misled, *even on the necessary points*, as their dissension is a witness; since even those who are *within the church* are misled."¹

Nay, we require, surely, no further testimony than the passages adduced from Origen himself and others, in a former part of this chapter, to show that errors on the most important points might be openly taught and promulgated by those who were all their lives in the communion of the catholic church, and were even followed, admired, and honoured members of it; of which Origen is a most remarkable and undeniable instance; whose writings were not condemned by the church till long after his death.

Were it necessary, we might point out many other instances of erroneous statements on important points in the works of Fathers who died in the communion of the church, and altogether free, as far as we know, from ecclesiastical censure; but the task

¹ See page 336 above.

is both ungrateful and unnecessary. The fact that there are such statements, is undeniable. The Fathers, therefore, may have erred on vital points, while, nevertheless, they remained in the communion of the church; and were not, as far as we know, publicly censured for want of orthodoxy. From whatever cause this might be, whether from their happening to be screened by circumstances, or from the elevated position they held in the church, or from the lack of any constituted authority to take cognizance of the matter, or from their condemnation not having come down to us, the fact is indisputable.

Now this appears to me to be fatal to the system of our opponents; for it is a necessary hypothesis for the support of their scheme, that had there been unorthodox notions in the writings of any Fathers in the communion of the catholic church, there would have been a condemnation of them by the church remaining to us. For this is the only reason for limiting ourselves to those of the catholic church, namely, the supposition that in their professed union with that church, we have a check against their being supporters of error, under the idea that the church would have rejected them, or condemned their errors, had they delivered unorthodox doctrine; and such a check, *to a certain extent*, we no doubt have; but, as might be expected, it is an insufficient one.

To such instances of error in the Fathers, however, our opponents immediately reply with an answer, which, to those who are willing to be deceived by fine words, looks very plausible; namely, that they "have no weight at all, one way or other, in the argument from *catholic tradition*." (Newman, p. 66.) Which would be very true, if we had *really catholic testimony* for our "catholic tradition;" but when we are sent to some half a dozen or dozen authors as the ground for claiming "catholic tradition," then the erroneous statements of individuals of great name are *comparatively* of great weight in the account, and seem to me to afford a strong argument that there was no *catholic tradition* in such matters, none, that is, that pervaded and was received generally throughout the whole catholic church.

Here, however, I would observe, that I do not notice these errors (as some have done) as if they lessened the authority of "catholic consent," even supposing it to exist on any point; for, on the contrary, they would appear to me rather to strengthen it; for patristical consent, under such circumstances, would be a still stronger evidence of the truth of what the Fathers *did* give a consentient testimony to, than if they had been more free from such imperfections. But they incontrovertibly show that there was not that consent in the catholic church, on all the important doctrines of the faith, which our opponents maintain there was,

and the supposition of which is essential to their system. The errors that we have shown to have been openly maintained by those who were in the communion of the church, without, as far as we know, their incurring ecclesiastical censure, clearly prove that the catholic church was not that exclusively orthodox and united body our opponents suppose it to have been, and that it is vain to look for "catholic consent."

Moreover, where is our "catholic tradition" for any point, *even in the authors that remain to us*, for erroneous statements are to be found in one or other of them upon almost *all* points?

How, indeed, was it to be expected that a vast number of distinct and independent communities far distant from one another, having no common tribunal or court of appeal, and maintaining but an occasional, and precarious, and slight communion with each other by the epistolary intercourse of their prelates, should remain for two or three centuries precisely of one mind in all the important points of the faith; and still more, all the teachers of all those various communities? Were there none to follow the example of Sardis and Laodicea? And when corruptions had been introduced, where was the tribunal competent infallibly to decide which had retained, and which had corrupted, the true faith? Where for instance was the tribunal competent to cut off the churches of Sardis, or Laodicea, or others similarly corrupted, from the catholic church, or that ever attempted to make such a separation? As far as appears, there was nothing of the kind ever set up in the primitive church.

Nay, let us once again advert to the case of our own church, and I would ask whether even here, with that full and explicit confession of faith to be found in her articles, the writings and teaching of all those who have died in her communion without any public censure, have been in all cases strictly orthodox even in fundamental points. It would be invidious to allude to individuals. I will therefore leave the inquiry in this general form. But can there be a doubt as to the answer which must be given in this or any similar case of a regularly constituted church having a public confession of faith by which all her members profess to abide? How much less, then, could consent be expected where there was no such confession of faith?

The fact is, as any one who will take the trouble impartially to study the works of the Fathers themselves, will at once see, there is the greatest possible diversity of sentiment among them even on the highest points, as in the former part of this chapter we have attempted to prove.

SECTION I.—REPLY TO OBJECTIONS, AND CONCLUDING REMARKS.

I now proceed, in the last place, to reply to the objections that have been urged against the views we advocate.

One of these has been already disposed of in the former part of this chapter. It has been objected that the position we maintain is just that of all the antient heretics, who always declined the testimony of tradition. I have already abundantly shown¹ that this is altogether a mistake, and that the heretics were in the habit of appealing to the testimonies of preceding Fathers, and calling their doctrines the doctrines of the catholic church, as much as the orthodox.

But it may be said,—

If Scripture is our only divine informant, then if there had been no Scriptures we should have had no divine informant.—But would it not have been the duty of men to believe the traditionary notices of religion they would have possessed, and may not therefore what comes to us now under the name of “tradition” have a claim upon our belief?

I reply, that God has not so left us, and therefore we cannot reason upon such a supposition, because the only ground for supposing that it would have been necessary to consider those traditionary notices a divine informant, arises from the hypothesis that otherwise there would have been no divine informant. Now it may be that God has given us the Scripture for the very reason, that without it tradition would not have preserved the truth and been a divine informant.

It is further objected,² however,—

That for more than two thousand years from the creation men were actually left to “tradition.”

A more unfortunate argument never was urged, for, in the first place, the example shows how utterly insufficient such a mode of transmitting truth is, when it failed even to perpetuate the knowledge of the one true God, the whole world having soon lapsed into polytheism and idolatry; and the few cases of true believers that are left on record, being such as were favoured with some peculiar and extraordinary divine manifestations.

Moreover, if “tradition” was sufficient, why was the law given through Moses so carefully written?

Nor were men left previously to depend upon such a broken reed as “tradition.” They had conscience and the light of nature to direct them; insufficient guides doubtless to lead men to

¹ See Sect. 7 above.

² Newman, p. 330. Bellarm. De Verb. Dei. iv. 4.

the knowledge of more than a few of the most elementary principles of religion, but nevertheless, all for the possession of which they are called to account in Scripture; for when the Apostle rebukes the heathen world for their iniquities, he does so, not because they disregarded "tradition," but because God's eternal power and Godhead may be clearly seen and understood from the works of creation, (Rom. i. 19, 20.) and he intimates that the Gentiles may "do by nature the things contained in the law," and be "a law unto themselves," and "show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." (Rom. ii. 14, 15.)

And thus the Fathers themselves tell us, that before the writing of the law, the bulk of mankind were left to the light of nature.

Thus Justin Martyr says that those among the heathen, such as Socrates and Heraclitus, who lived *according to the dictates of reason*, were Christians, though they might be reckoned atheists;¹ *of the orthodoxy of which passage (as of others quoted below) I say nothing*, but it shows his view on the point now in question.

Thus also Irenæus identifies the decalogue with "those natural precepts which God from the beginning implanted in the hearts of men."²

And Clement of Alexandria tells us, that "before the coming of Christ *philosophy* was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness;" that "God is the cause of all good things, of some immediately, as of the Old and New Testament, of others mediately, as of philosophy. But perhaps it [i. e. philosophy] was then given by him to the Greeks immediately, before that the Lord had called the Greeks, for this, as a schoolmaster, led the Greeks to Christ, as the law did the Hebrews. Therefore philosophy prepares beforehand, and makes ready the way for him who is perfected by Christ."³

¹ "Οἱ μετὰ λόγου βιωσαντες Χριστιανοὶ ἡμεῖς, καὶ ἀδελφοὶ νομιζόμεθα οἷον ἡ Ἑλλὰς καὶ Σικκία καὶ Ἡρακλῆτος καὶ οἱ ὅμοιοι αὐτοῖς. Apol. 1. § 46. p. 71. ed. Bened. (ed. Col. Apol. 2. p. 83.)

² Nam Deus primo quidem per naturalia prœcepta, quæ ab initio infixæ dedit hominibus, admonens eos [i. e. Judæos,], id est, per Decalogum (quæ si quis non fecerit, non habet salutem,) nihil plus ab eis exquisivit. IREN. Adv. hæc. iv. 15. ed. Mass. c. 28. ed. Grab.

³ Ἡ μὲν οὖν προ τῆς τοῦ Κυρίου παρουσίας ἡ δικαιοσύνη Ἑλλήσιν ἀνεγκλίμα φιλοσοφία . . . παρὰ τὴν μὲν γὰρ αἰτίαν τῶν καλῶν ὁ Θεὸς ἀλλὰ τὴν μὲν, κατὰ προνομίαν, ὡς τῆς τε διαβητικῆς πελάγης καὶ τῆς τῶν δὲ, κατ' ἀνακολουθίαν, ὡς τῆς φιλοσοφίας. Τὰχα δὲ καὶ προνομίαν τῶς Ἑλλήσιν ἔδωκε τότε, πρὶν ἢ τοὺς Κυριοὺς καλεῖσθαι καὶ τοὺς Ἑλλήνας. ἐπειδε γὰρ καὶ αὐτὰ τοὺς Ἑλληνας ὡς ὁ νόμος τοὺς Εβραίους ὡς Χριστοὺς. Προπαρασκευάζει τοὺς ἡ φιλοσοφία, προεργάζεσθαι τὸν ὁπότε Χριστὸς τελευτούμενον. CLEM. ALEX. Strom. lib. i. p. 331. ed. Potter (al. p. 282.)

Thus Tertullian says, that "before the law was written by Moses, the Fathers observed that which nature taught them," and that by this Noah and others were considered righteous.¹

Eusebius, that "before the written laws of Moses, many of the earlier Fathers were adorned with the virtue of piety, through the right use of their reason."²

Theodoret, "that the Abrahamic race received the divine law, and enjoyed the blessing of prophecy, but the Governor of the universe led the other nations to piety through *nature and creation*."³

Now whatever may be thought of these passages in other respects, it is at least clear from them that their authors did not hold that those who preceded Moses were left to the guidance of "*tradition*," but to that of reason and conscience.

The traditionary notices they might possess on the subject of religion had not, *as traditions*, any definitive claim upon their belief. They were not binding upon the conscience, on the ground of their having been transmitted to them by their ancestors. The uncertainty of the mode of conveyance made it necessary for them to *test* those notices by some independent standard of judgment. And that standard was the light of nature and the works of creation.

Look at the present state of the heathen world. There are evidently some remains of primitive tradition among them. But have they anything which can be called the word of God, any Divine rule of faith? Are they bound to receive the traditionary notices of religion that have come down to them from their ancestors? Or rather, are they not bound, strictly speaking, to exercise the light of their natural reason and conscience, and reject those traditions, as opposed to the voice of conscience and the testimony of creation?

Such, also, had we been left to "tradition," would have been the case with us. There would have been a vast number of traditionary doctrines, some of them having their *origin* in Divine revelation, though perhaps much corrupted from their original purity, and the greater number probably having their origin altogether in the dreams of the human imagination, and

¹ Ante legem Moysi scriptam, quæ naturaliter intelligebatur et a Patribus eus todiebatur. Nam unde Noe justus inventus, si non illum naturalis legis justitia præcedebat? unde Abraham amicus Dei deputatus, si non de æquitate et justitia legis naturalis? &c. Adv. Jud. c. 2. p. 184. ed. 1664.

² Πρὸ τῶν ἐγγράφων αὐτοῦ νόμων, πλείους ἢ τῶν προπατορῶν ὁρθοὶ λογισμοὶ θεοσεβείας αὐτῇ κατεκόσμηθησαν. Præpar. Evang. lib. vii. c. 7, p. 305.

³ Το μὲν γὰρ ἀβραμῆαιον γένος, καὶ νομοὶ θνοὶ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ προφητείας ἀπὸ λαοῦ χρηματός. τα δὲ γὰρ ἄλλα ἦν διὰ τῆς φύσεως καὶ τῆς κτίσεως ἐποδημίαι πρὸς θεοσεβείαν τῶν ἄλλων ὁ πρωταίος. THEODORET. Græc. affect. curat. Disput. 1. prope fin. Op. ed. Schulze, tom. iv. p. 725.

all of them coming down to us clouded with the doubt and uncertainty inseparable from the mode of conveyance by which they were transmitted ; and we should have been left to the guidance of our natural reason and conscience, to find our way among them as well as we could.

Now I need hardly remind the reader, that though the practical truths of Christianity are such as might be admitted to carry evidence with them of their divine origin, many of the doctrines of the Christian faith are not such as the natural reason and conscience would thus recognize as divine. We need very direct proof of their revelation to convince us of their truth. Such proof we cannot have in "tradition," and therefore it pleased God to commit them to writing, that we might have a sure testimony to the truth in all ages to the end of the world.

In that which "tradition" delivers, the uncertainty of the mode of conveyance makes it necessary for reason to judge of the nature of the doctrine delivered. In that which Scripture delivers, our reason judges not of the doctrine delivered, but only of the grounds for believing Scripture to be the word of God ; and having ascertained Scripture to be the word of God, reason and conscience have only to accept the revelation there made with an humble and implicit faith.

We do not, then, think it necessary to deny, that "tradition" might hand down to us a report of some truths that have a divine origin ; but we maintain, that coming from such a source such truths have not in themselves a claim to our belief. They must be judged by reason and conscience, and in our case by the light of that which we know to be a divine revelation ; and whatever may be our individual feeling respecting them, never be laid down as part of the authoritative rule of faith for mankind in general.

Nor is it any argument against this that some of the early Christians believed, upon the testimony of those who gave only an oral report of the gospel. For it will be allowed on all hands that such oral report could not in itself have any authoritative claim upon the faith of the hearers. But it was generally accompanied in those times with some external signs, manifesting its divine nature, or otherwise it was still more effectually impressed upon the heart by the Spirit of God, through the ministrations of those who preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, rendering the more abundant testimony we possess to its divine origin unnecessary.

Lastly, as our opponents think so much of the authority of the Fathers, we may add that Chrysostom expressly refers the knowledge of the truths of religion enjoyed by the patriarchs before Moses to the revelations made directly to them.

"We ought not," he says, "to have needed the aid of writings, but to have lived so purely, that the grace of the Spirit might have supplied to our souls the place of books; and as these are inscribed with ink, so our souls by the Spirit. But since we have driven away this grace, let us set sail afresh upon that second course of navigation that is open to us. For that the former was better, God hath manifested, both by what he hath said and by what he hath done. For to Noah and Abraham, and their descendants, and to Job and Moses, he did not speak through writings, but he himself addressed them, finding their mind to be pure. But when the whole nation of the Hebrews fell into the depth of iniquity, then it was necessary that there should be for the future writings and tables, and the remembrance of things be preserved through these. And this happened, we may observe, not only with the saints of the Old Testament, but also with those of the New. For God did not give any writing to the Apostles, but instead of writings he promised that he would give them the grace of the Spirit. For 'he,' saith he, 'shall bring all things to your remembrance.' . . . But when, in process of time, they erred, some on account of doctrines, others in life and manners, [which shows how soon Chrysostom believed such errors to have prevailed] there was again need of writings to preserve a remembrance of the truth."¹

Theophylact, as usual, follows with precisely the same remark. Again, it is objected,—

That the promises of Christ ensure to the Church Catholic freedom from error in fundamental points, and therefore that in such points at least the testimony of that church must be equivalent to a divine informant.

But, as we have already seen,² Mr. Newman himself admits that all the promises of Christ to the Church would be fulfilled by the existence of a succession of individuals in the church holding the true faith. The promises of Christ, therefore, ensure

¹ Ἐάν μιν ἡμεῖς μὴ διδῶμεν τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν γραμμάτων βωβῆς ἀλλ' οὕτω θεῶν παροχῶν καθεσθῶμεν, ὥς τοῦ Πνεύματος τὴν χάριν ἀντὶ βιβλίων γινώσκειν τὰς ἡμετέρας ψυχὰς, καὶ καθίσταναι τὰ ταῦτα διὰ μύλωνος, οὕτω τὰς καρδίας τὰς ἡμετέρας διὰ πνεύματος ἐγγεγραμμένα. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ταύτην διηκουσμένην τῆς χάριτος, φέρει, καὶ τὸν δεύτερον ἀσπασμένην πλουτοῖ. Ἐπειδὴ οὖν τὸ πρότερον ἀμύνοντι, καὶ διὰ αὐτῶν, καὶ διὰ αὐτῶν, ἐκλήσκειν ὁ Θεός. Καὶ γὰρ τῶν Νῶε καὶ τῶν Ἀβραὰμ καὶ τῶν Ἰσὼβ καὶ τῶν Μωϋσέων διὰ τοῦτο διὰ γραμμάτων ἐγγεγραμμένα, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ δὲ αὐτῶν, καθάσταν ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ τῇ διακρίσει. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ οὐκ αὐτοὶ τὰς κακίας ἐκτίσιν τὸν πῦθμωνα ἀπὸς τῶν Ἑβραίων ὁ δῆμος, ἀναγκαστικῶς ἔλαττον γραμμάτια καὶ πλάκας, καὶ ἡ διὰ τούτων ὑπομνήσις. Καὶ τούτο, οὐκ ἐπὶ τῇ ἐν τῇ παλαιᾷ ἀγίᾳ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ ἐν τῇ καινῇ συμβῶν ἰδίαις αἰ. Οὐδὲ γὰρ τοῖς ἀποστόλοις ἔδωκεν τι γραπτὸν ὁ Θεός ἀλλ' ἀντὶ γραμμάτων τῇ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐγγεγραμμένῳ δώσει χάριν. Ἐκείνος γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἀναμνήσκει, φέρει, παύει. . . . Ἐπειδὴ δὲ πολλοὶ τοῦ χρόνου προέχοντες ἐβλαβήθησαν, εἰ μὴ διὰ τῶν γραμμάτων ἐκτίσιν, οἱ δὲ θεῶν καὶ τῶν τῶν, ὡς οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν γραμμάτων ὑπομνήσις. Chrysostom. in Matth. hom. 1. init. tom. vii. pp. 1, 2.

² See pp. 49 and 143, &c. above.

only the existence of a body of true worshippers in all ages. Now certainly the testimony of this select body might be considered a sure witness of the truth. But how are we to obtain it? To gather the suffrages of all Christians is an impossibility. To select those by whose judgment we will abide is to constitute ourselves the judges and make any appeal to others a mere self-deception. On this point, however, we have already spoken in a former page.¹

Further, it is objected that "tradition" is like that unwritten law of custom, which is admitted by all states as binding.

Mr. Newman, speaking of the *theory* of the Romanists on the subject of tradition (and *the theory*, as we have shown, both he himself and Dr. Pusey accept) observes,—“By tradition they mean the whole system of faith and ordinances which they have received from the generation before them, and that generation again from the generation before itself. And in this sense, undoubtedly, we all go by tradition in matters of the world At this very time, great part of the law of the land is administered under the sanction of such a tradition; it is not contained in any formal or authoritative code, it depends on custom or precedent When the Romanists say they adhere to tradition, they mean that they believe and act as Christians have always believed and acted; they go by the custom, as judges and juries do.” And this custom, “when traced back, *has no beginning short of the Apostles of Christ*, and is in consequence of *divine*, not of human *authority*, is true and *intrinsically binding*, as well as expedient. If we ask, why it is that these professed traditions were not reduced to writing, it is answered that the Christian doctrine, as it has proceeded from the mouth of the Apostles, is *too varied and too minute in its details to allow of it* If, again, it be objected that this notion of an unwritten transmission of the truth being supposed, there is nothing to show that the faith of to-day was the faith of yesterday, nothing to connect this age and the Apostolic, they maintain, on the contrary, that over and above the corroborative, though indirect, testimony of ecclesiastical writers, no error could have arisen in the church without its being protested against, and put down on this [?] its first appearance; that from all parts of the church a cry would have been raised against the novelty, and a declaration put forth, as we know was the practice of the early church, denouncing it.”²

Thus does Mr. Newman countenance the delusive statements by which Rome has gained over so many to her communion, that

¹ See pp. 49 and 143 above.

² Newman, pp. 38—40.

would represent the catholic church as having always been a compact, united body, keeping her communion free from the taint of heresy, and handing down, from age to age, with scrupulous fidelity, a full and complete code of doctrine and rites, delivered to her by the Apostles,—a representation as far as possible from the truth, and which it is difficult to conceive how any one that has looked with an impartial eye into the records of the church can for a moment entertain. It is a notion which even the writings of the third century repudiate.

Mr. Keble follows in the same path, and contends, that on principles exactly analagous to those on which certain customs are received as part of the common law, certain "church practices and rules" "ought, *apart from all Scripture evidence*, to be received as traditionary, or common laws ecclesiastical;" adding, that "they who contend that the very notion of such tradition is a mere dream and extravagance . . . must, if they would be consistent, deny the validity of the most important portion of the laws of this and of most other old countries."¹

The argument is, as usual, supplied by Bellarmine.²

These remarks of Mr. Keble I must confess myself unable to understand; for why it should follow that because I deny that we have sufficient evidence of any oral traditions of the Apostles, and consequently the binding nature of anything which may profess to be derived from them, therefore, to be consistent, I must deny the validity of the common law of this country, I cannot comprehend. I can only say, that when Mr. Keble has traced up any custom to the Apostles with the same certainty as would be required in tracing up a custom beyond the period of legal memory, to make it binding in a court of common law, I shall be quite prepared to receive it as Apostolical.

Be it observed, also, that this argument affects merely the customs, and not the doctrines of the church, notwithstanding Mr. Newman's attempt, in the extract given above, to make it include the latter as well as the former.

But, after all, where is the similarity of the two cases, or what does the argument prove? Customs that have prevailed for several centuries are received by most states as an unwritten law; so that if a custom can be clearly traced up beyond a certain period, it is ordained that, however it may have arisen, it shall be considered binding. But as it respects the church, there is no tribunal or government authorised to enact such an ordinance; and if there were, it is obvious that the two cases are wholly different, because the rites of the church are connected altogether with the worship of God, for the regulation of which, customs,

¹ P. 33.

² De verb. Dei, iv. 8.

casually or voluntarily introduced, are a most insufficient guide. Moreover, such rites only are binding upon the whole church, as were laid down for its observance by our Lord and his Apostles.

True, it may be, and no doubt is, necessary for the church to have rules and customs beyond what are laid down in the Scriptures, and it is wise to innovate as little as possible in such matters; and the duty incumbent upon her members of observing such rules, as long as they are not inconsistent with the declarations of Scripture or their duty to God, is not here disputed.—But the question is, whether such rules and customs are to be enforced as having been ordained by the Apostles, for which the evidence we have for that professed apostolical sanction is wholly insufficient. Trace them to the Apostles with the same certainty that customs are traced beyond the period of legal memory before they are allowed to have the force of law, and we will at once admit them to have apostolical authority.

Lastly, a very favourite argument with our opponents, as with the Romanists, is, that as we are satisfied to take the book of the Scriptures from the early church, so we cannot reasonably object to take the meaning of those Scriptures from her, for that if we can trust the Fathers in the one case, so can we in the other.

There is a very true remark in one of the "Tracts," that "any thing has been ventured and believed in the heat of controversy, and the ultimate appeal is to *the common sense of mankind*." (Tr. 85. p. 79.) To that "common sense" I leave the above argument.

Let me, however, give an illustration of it. Mr. Newman, we will suppose, delivers a Treatise on Justification, rather obscurely penned, (for so must we suppose to preserve the similarity of the two cases in Mr. Newman's view of the matter,) to a brother clergyman, to whom also he delivers orally an explanation of its meaning. The book travelling through many hands, accompanied in each transfer with an attempted repetition of the oral comment, comes at last into my hands, and the deliverer gives me also the oral comment. Now I shall get the book safe enough, but shall I be *sure* to get the explanation safe? If, in controverting the book, I should remark that this or that passage, though obscure as it stands in the book, certainly has such a meaning, because Mr. Newman in his oral comment, which came to me through only a dozen successive deliveries, declared that such was its meaning, might not an opponent reasonably say, My friend, you ought not to be so positive in the matter, for recollect how liable an oral communication is to alteration in passing through so many hands, and would not the rebuke be a

very just one? Nay, who knows not how liable a sermon or speech is to be misreported even in its first transit, so that we hold any man to be unjust who condemns another upon such evidence.

And mark whither such a principle would lead us. We receive the books of the Old Testament from the Jews. Therefore, according to this argument, we are bound to receive the meaning of them from the Jews. Therefore we are bound to reject the New Testament and Christianity altogether.

"We can never be assured," says our learned Henry Wharton (in his Preface to an old treatise by Bishop Peacock on "Scripture the rule of faith," republished by him in the great Popish Controversy at the end of the 17th century,) "that any articles were invariably and entirely without any addition or diminution conveyed down to us by tradition; since it hath been in all times and ages observed, that matters of *fact*, *much more of belief*, not immediately committed to writing presently degenerated into fables, and were corrupted by the capricious malice or ignorance of men. Nothing can exempt the tradition of the Christian religion from this fate, at least from our reasonable suspicions of it, but the infallibility of that society of men which conveys down this tradition. But the latter can never be known till this certainty of tradition be first cleared and presupposed, since the belief of this supposed infallibility must at last be resolved into the sole truth and certainty of tradition. In the next place, tradition cannot certainly and invariably propose the belief of Christianity to all private persons. For from whence shall this tradition be received? From a Pope, or a Council, or both, or from none of these, but only *the Universal Church*? In every one of these cases infinite difficulties will occur, which will singly appear insuperable. As, Who is a true Pope, What his intentions in defining were, Whether he acted canonically, In what sense he hath defined. What Councils, whether Œcumenical, Patriarchal, or Provincial, may be securely trusted? *What are the necessary conditions and qualifications of a general Council? Whether all these conditions were ever observed in any Council?* What these Councils are, what they have defined, what is the true sense and intention of their definitions? *From whom must we learn the belief of the Universal Church, if Popes and Councils be rejected? From all Christians, or only from the clergy? If from the latter, whether the assent of every member of the clergy be required? If not, how great a part may safely dissent from the rest? From whom the opinion of the major part is to be received? Whether from the writings of doctors or the teaching of living pastors? If from the latter, whether it be sufficient to*

hear one or a few Parish Priests, or all, or at least the major number, are personally to be consulted? All these difficulties may be branched out into many more, and others no less insuperable be found out; which will render the proposal of religion by way of tradition, if not utterly impracticable, at least infinitely unsafe. Thirdly, tradition is so far from being independent on other articles of the Christian faith, that *the belief of all other articles must be presupposed to it*. For since all sects propose different traditions, and the truth of none of them is self-evident, it must first be known which is the true church before it can be determined which is the true tradition. Now, the knowledge of the true church can be obtained only two ways, either from the truth of her doctrines, or from the external notes of the true church. If the first way, then it must first be known what are the true and genuine doctrines of Christianity, the steadfast belief of which causeth this society to become the true church. But if the true church be known only from some external notes, these notes are either taught by Scripture, or found out by the light of reason. If taught by Scripture, then the knowledge of the Divine authority of Scripture is antecedent to the knowledge of the true church, and consequently independent on it. For otherwise Scripture will be believed for the authority of the church, and the church for the authority of Scripture; which is a manifest circle. . . . Lastly, if the notes of the church may be found out by natural reason, then to pass by the infinite contradictions which would arise from such a proposition, these notes can be no other than antiquity, universality, perpetuity, and such like; *every one of which doth some way or other presuppose the knowledge of the true doctrines of Christianity*, as well as those of the present church. For the end of these notes is to compare the former with the latter, and consequently both of them must be first known."¹

Such is the testimony of one of our most learned divines. It would be easy to multiply such testimonies, and considering the confident claims made by our opponents to the suffrage of all our great divines in their favour, and which have justly contributed more than anything else to the support of their cause, such testimonies are of considerable importance. But as a future chapter will be set apart for them, I will here only add one more, namely that of Placcette in his "*Incurable scepticism of the Church of Rome*," *as translated and published by our learned Archbishop Tenison*. I have already quoted more than once from

¹ Prof. to "A Treatise proving Scripture to be the rule of faith, writ by Reginald Peacock, Bishop of Chichester, before the Reformation, about the year 1450." Lond. 1688. 4to.

this treatise, but there are some valuable remarks on the notion of grounding our faith on the "consent of doctors," of which I will here present the reader with the substance; and in which, we may observe, he distinctly maintains that no such consent has been obtainable in any age of the Church.

"That it cannot be learned from the consent of doctors what is to be believed," is clear, he says, "1. Because it doth not appear who those doctors are. 2. Because those doctors whosoever they are do not always agree . . . It doth not appear who are those doctors whose consent is required [that is, as he explains, whether they are bishops only or all the clergy] . . . But neither would that suffice, if it were of faith. Somewhat else would be yet necessary, viz. to know certainly whether to give assent to the doctrine of these pastors and doctors, whosoever they be, it be required that all should consent in their doctrine every one of them, which they call all *mathematically*; or whether the consent of all *morally*, that is almost all will suffice: again, who they are exactly that may be called all morally, and how great a part of the whole may dissent without prejudicing the infallibility of the rest, whether the third, or the fourth, or the tenth, or the hundredth, &c. who shall define this? If all mathematically must consent, God would have appointed a rule which never existed; for so absolute a consent *never was* among the governors of the church. But he which shall say, it sufficeth that almost all consent, ought not only to affirm but also to prove what he says. But how shall so obscure a thing be proved? or what certainty can be had in it? Yet grant it can be had, it is *still to be defined when almost all can be said to have consented*; for that hath a certain latitude wherein some men will think that number to be included which others hold excluded.

But not to seem too scrupulous, let our adversaries define this as they please, and almost all be accounted to have consented when only a tenth, twelfth, or twentieth part shall dissent. Let all this be as certain, as it is indeed doubtful and uncertain. I ask, whether that consent which it shall have pleased our adversaries to define necessary is always to be had? If any one think so, he must be a stranger to all ecclesiastical history, and never have heard of the prevailing heresies of Arius, Nestorius, and Eutyches, not to mention others. But you will say, they were heretics, whereas we require only the consent of catholics. Right; but *it did not sensibly appear they were heretics; rather that was then the question, who were heretics and who orthodox.* For the Arians, Nestorians, and Eutychians took to themselves the name of catholics, and branded the rest with the imputation of heresy. *Now if this question, which was certainly a matter of faith, was to be determined only from the consent of*

doctors, it could never have been determined to the world's end, since that consent was never to be found. But to deal liberally with our adversaries, have not those often dissented whom themselves acknowledge catholic? In the second and third age the Asiatics dissented from the Europeans about the celebration of Easter. In the third age, all the Africans, and many of the Asiatics, from the rest about the rebaptization of heretics. In the fourth age, the followers of Theophilus, Epiphanius, and St. Hierome from the favourers of Origen about his condemnation," &c. &c. "That the consent of doctors, even when it can be had, is more difficult to be known than that we can by the help of it attain to the knowledge of the truth. . . . This consent, *if it could be had*, is not so manifest and obvious as a rule of faith ought necessarily to be, which by the confession of all must be clear, evident, and easy to be applied. This *Duvall* assigns for 'an essential condition of a rule of faith,' and acknowledgeth that 'if a rule obscurely proposeth the mysteries of faith it would thereby become no rule.' And for this reason our adversaries so much exaggerate the obscurity of Scripture that they may thereby show it could not be given by God for a rule of faith. To which end *Gr. a Valentia* layeth down this axiom, which he afterwards applieth to the Scripture, 'The sentence of that authority which is to judge of all matters of faith ought to be manifest, that it may be easily understood by all the faithful. For if that authority doth not teach perspicuously and plainly, it will be of no use to that end.' So he, and with him many others. If, therefore, I shall show that the consent of pastors about matters of belief is so obscure and difficult to be known that even the most learned, much more illiterate, men cannot avoid error in searching it out, I shall thereby prove that it could not be given to us by God as a common rule of things to be believed. This obscurity and difficulty ariseth from three causes. The first is the amplitude of the church diffused throughout the whole world, which permits not the faith of all pastors to be known unless we travel through all those regions wherein they are dispersed. . . . The second reason of the difficulty of knowing the common consent of other doctors, is the obscure knowledge which is in the church of some points concerning which no disputation hath been yet raised. For nothing is more true than that opinions are illustrated by controversies. . . . We proceed to the third reason, which consisteth in this, *That some opinions are often divulged in the church as revealed by God and approved by the church and are everywhere taught, which at last are found out and known to be false,*" &c. "That it doth not suffice, it be known that anything is taught unanimously by the governors of the church, unless it appear that it is taught to be of faith; but that

this is most uncertain . . . Not whatsoever they unanimously affirm is to be received as the revelation of God, and the doctrine of the church, but only what they unanimously maintained to be of faith. This *Canus* and *Bellarmino* plainly insinuate Before we believe therefore the doctrine of the Governors of the church, we must consider how they teach it, whether as of faith; if not, we must suspend our assent. Now bishops, parsons and preachers are wont to teach what seems true to them and agreeing with divine revelation; but very rarely to admonish whether what they teach be of faith or a consequent of faith, whether expressly revealed or coherent to things revealed. This Holden acknowledgeth, 'We never heard,' saith he, 'that the church in delivering the Christian doctrine exhibited or composed a Catalogue of revealed articles and divine institutions, whereby those articles of divine faith might be separately and distinctly known from all others, which are either of ecclesiastical institution, or not immediately founded upon divine revelation, but *taught all together confusedly and indistinctly*.' Hence even those divines who agree in the truth of any article often differ in judging whether it be of faith."¹

These remarks, though made with a more especial reference apparently to the particular age of the church in which the inquirer may live, are yet more forcible with regard to the system of our opponents, for the difficulties here mentioned as operating against the possibility of obtaining consent of doctors are such as would be greater in the latter than in the former case. And we may say the same for the remarks which follow these against the possibility of finding any sure ground for our faith in the consent of the universal church, including clergy and laity, respecting which he proceeds to prove (as quoted in a former page) "that there is nothing whereon the faith of all private Christians can less rely; 1. Because it doth not appear what is that universal church whose faith is to be the rule of ours. 2. Because it is not known what is the faith of that church. 3. Because it is not manifest, whether the faith of any church assignable be true,"² on each of which points he adds some valuable remarks which I would commend to the notice of the reader.³

It is worth remarking that the scheme of our opponents has been a favourite notion with some of the irenical writers, who, feeling the want of some court of appeal by which the differences dividing the several parties of the Christian world from one another could be decided, have fancied like the Tractators that they could find such an arbitrator in the consent of the Fathers

¹ See cc. 20, 21, 22.

² See cc. 24—27.

³ See c. 24.

of the first few centuries. Such seems to have been the notion of the Romanist Cassander, who in his irenical exposition of the articles of the faith professes to have scrupulously followed that consent as his guide.¹ Such also was the view expressly advocated by the Lutheran George Calixtus and others in the 17th century, who entertained the hope of thereby effecting a reconciliation between the Romanists and Protestants, and bringing the whole church to a state of peace and amity,² a consummation worthy of any labours and efforts for its accomplishment, but little likely to be brought about by such means, or indeed by any human means. But "consent of Fathers" is indeed a broken reed to depend upon for such a purpose.

I conclude with one remark, viz., That my object in this chapter has not been to withdraw from the Fathers that respect that is due to many of them, but to show that the notion put forward by our opponents respecting their claim to our belief, as an authority binding upon the conscience is utterly without foundation. In doing this, it has been impossible to avoid an exposure of their mistakes and infirmities, which one would willingly have been spared the necessity of making. If a near and dear relative were to be set up by a party in the Christian church as an *infallible* expositor of the Divine word, having authority over the consciences of men, and a right to our implicit *faith* in his decisions, the nearness of the relationship would doubtless render the task of exposing the absurdity of such a notion, one which we could not undertake without considerable pain. Infinitely rather would we have had the task of commending his good qualities to others and exhorting them to follow him, as he followed Christ. But are we, therefore, to acquiesce in the notion, and be parties to the delusion?

Very similarly circumstanced are we in the treatment of our present subject. Certain Fathers of the Christian church, viz., those whose writings remain to us, have been placed before us by a party in the church, as the infallible expositors of the Divine word and doctrine.

Now, of such men it is painful to speak but with regard to those points in which we may justly respect and follow them. It

¹ See Cassandri Consultatio prope finem.

² Eo devenerunt [i. e. G. Calixtus, Conr. Horneius et Christ. Drejerus] ut Scripturæ Sacre consensum Ecclesiæ aut Patrum, præsertim quinque priorum sæculorum adjungerent, contenderentque in rebus dubiis consensum illum seu veritatis regulam amplectendum, et quidquid isto consensu niteretur, hoc solum creditu ad salutem esse necessarium, nec adeo fundamentales errores exprobrari illis posse, qui crederent quæ cum isto Patrum consensu convenirent. Hoc nimirum illud ipsum erat, quod Vincentium Lerinensem docuisse antea observavimus, quem et ducem hic se sequi ipsimet profitebantur. Budd. Isag. ad Theolog. lib. ii. c. 3. vol. i. p. 511. See also Walch. Biblioth. vol. ii. pp. 498 &c.

is an ungrateful task to point out their infirmities and dissensions. But when their claims upon us are magnified to an extent to endanger the very foundation upon which our faith is built, however painful the task may be, it is one of which duty to the church requires the performance. It is the natural and inevitable consequence of their having been exalted by our opponents to a seat of authority which does not belong to them. As men of talent and piety, and connected with an early period of the Christian church, their statements are of considerable value, both from the character of their authors, and as witnesses of what was held by some portion of the primitive church in their day. As witnesses to facts coming under their own observation, their testimony is invaluable. But to set up their *consent* as a practically infallible reporter of the teaching and traditions of the Apostles, is not only to give their witness an authority over our consciences to which it has not the shadow of a title, but is, in fact, to make an appeal to that which neither ever had any existence, nor if it had, would be ascertainable by us.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE GROUNDS ON WHICH THE DOCTRINE RESTS THAT SCRIPTURE IS
THE WORD OF GOD.

It is a remark continually in the mouth of our opponents and the Romanists, that if we do not allow the claim they set up for patristical tradition, we take away the foundation upon which rests the doctrine that Scripture is the word of God; for that upon the testimony of patristical tradition rests altogether the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture.

This, I hope to show, is very far from being the case; and that however insufficient the testimony of the patristical tradition we possess may be, to be a certain witness of the oral teaching of the Apostles, or to be considered a divine informant, the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture stands unmoved, and on a firm foundation.

This is the subject of the *fifth* of the positions we have noticed above (pp. 40, 41) as embodying the doctrine of our opponents on the question we are discussing, and to it I think it desirable to direct the attention of the reader before we proceed further.

It will not, I hope, be denied, that a saving belief in Scripture being the word of God, must be the work of the Spirit of God upon the heart; and that such a faith might be produced under that influence, even though the external evidence should be in itself weak and insufficient; and that such a faith is of the highest and most perfect kind, including all and more than all, which can be produced by a faith wrought by the force of evidence alone; and that any other faith, as long as it stands alone, is, in fact, useless.

Here, however, I cannot but remark, that when our opponents are speaking on such subjects there is a remarkable and lamentable lack of reference (to use the mildest phrase) to the necessity of this spiritual influence in the hearts of individuals to produce true Christian faith.

For, as their favourite Archbishop Laud will tell them, it is "God's Spirit who *alone* works faith and belief of the Scriptures and their divine authority, as well as other articles;" our assent to this truth is "by the operation of God's spirit." "The credit of Scripture to be divine, resolves, finally, into that faith which we have touching God himself, and in the same order. For as that, so this hath three main grounds, to which all others are reducible. The first is, the tradition of the church; and this leads us to a reverend persuasion of it. The second is, the light of nature . . . The third is, *the light of the text itself, in conversing wherewith we meet with the Spirit of God, inwardly inclining our hearts, and sealing the full assurance of the sufficiency of all three unto us. And then, and not before, we are certain, that the Scripture is the Word of God, both by divine, and by infallible proof;*"¹ from which latter passage (and many similar and stronger occur in the context) we may see how far the Archbishop was from the sentiments of our opponents on the point which forms the subject of this chapter.

True Christian faith, then, in Scripture being the Word of God, rests ultimately upon a testimony of a much better kind than the witness of man can supply in any case.

To the question, How shall we undoubtedly know the Scriptures to be the Word of God? "I answer," says Dr. Chaloner, "that we may know them to be so, partly by the light of the Word, that is, the divine notes and characters therein imprinted, and partly by the enlightening and persuading grace of God's Spirit, enabling us to see, and moving us to believe what we see."² And he remarks,—“The former, (which is the word itself, and the notes thereof,) cannot be denied by an ingenuous Papist, to be there found; for howsoever some of them, *by a just judgment of God, for being injurious to the Scriptures, in branding them with obscurity, imperfection, &c., have been so blinded by the Prince of Darkness*, that, (setting aside the judgment of the Church,) no reason to them hath appeared wherefore *Æsop's Fables* should not as well as the Scriptures themselves be thought canonical, yet others, as Bellarmine, Greg. de Valentia, Gretser, &c., do knowledge these distinguishing notes to be in their kind argumentative, and to shine in them, as the excellency of the doctrine, concord, efficacy, and the like, whereby may be verified of the whole book of God, what the officers sent by the Pharisees and Priests said of our Saviour, John vii. *Never man spake like this man*. Nor is the latter (which is the inward testimony of the Spirit) denied, by the learned sort of

¹ Reply to Fisher, § 16, sub fin. ed. 1686. p. 74.

² Credo Sanct. Eccles. Cathol. ed. 1638. p. 104.

Papists, to possess another chief place in the discovery of the Scriptures. For although in popular air they seem to vent the contrary, yet when they are called to give a more sober account in writing, they utter the same in effect which we do."¹

Be the case, then, as it may in this respect, with that which patristical tradition delivers to us, Scripture at least has a testimony to the fact of its being a revelation from God, far higher and more influential than any human witness.

Hence the conclusion of the Tractators, that because there is (*as they suppose*) as good testimony in the Fathers for the apostolicity of certain doctrines and rites, as for the apostolical origin of the Scriptures, therefore if we believe the latter, we must also believe the former, is altogether groundless and unwarrantable. For even supposing that the patristical testimony for the two should be equally strong (which we altogether deny) this is but one, and the least persuasive portion of the evidence for the divine origin of Scripture. The Fathers may bear equally strong testimony to two things, one of which is true, and the other false; and of which, therefore, the former only has the witness of the Spirit in its favour.

And that more influential witness of the Spirit is, we may hope, enjoyed by every humble-minded inquirer after the truth; for if they who are evil, as our blessed Lord reminds us, know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. Nor will it be any cause for scepticism to a mind thus taught, if it should even happen that the external evidence for the divine origin of that Word which he venerates as the Word of God, is less strong than it might be.

How, indeed, is a conviction of the divine origin of Scripture to be produced otherwise in thousands who are unable to investigate the external evidence? To those who know not what that evidence is, or are unable to appreciate it, it cannot be a sufficient foundation for faith.

And shall we deprive Christianity of its greatest glory, as being the Dispensation of the Spirit, and leave the poor and illiterate either to grope their way among the records of antiquity to find a foundation for their faith, or to pin their faith upon the affirmation of a few individuals, when Scripture offers such gracious promises of assistance to the sincere inquirer after the truth?

To make historical testimony the only ground for belief in this truth, is equivalent to admitting that nine-tenths of mankind have no sure foundation for their belief in it; for however valid that

¹ Credo Sanct. Eccles. Cathol. ed. pp. 98—100.

testimony may be, they neither know what it is, nor are able to appreciate its value.

Thus much, then, we have felt it necessary to premise on a point, which, alas! the Tractators seem altogether to have overlooked.

Further, to make the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture rest upon the bare affirmation of the Fathers, (as our opponents do,) is equivalent to saying that our belief in the divine origin of Scripture is founded on no better evidence than the belief of Mohammedans in the divine origin of the Koran. For the chief and vital point in this doctrine is the divine origin of the revelation contained in Scripture, for which the belief of any number of individuals is no sufficient foundation for faith.

Let us observe that it is not a mere matter of fact which is here involved, nor what could ever be the object of *knowledge* to any individual, but a doctrine which, in all cases, could only be an object of *faith*. Moreover, it is a doctrine standing upon a foundation peculiar to itself. For even granting that patristical tradition might be a safe medium for the conveyance of the oral teaching of the Apostles, the concession proves nothing for the validity of such tradition, as a proof of the inspiration of the Apostles; for it is not the assertion of any number of individuals, or of the Apostles themselves, that can be any sufficient proof to us of their inspiration.

Nor does it help us to take such tradition as indicating that strict catholic consent which we may suppose from the promises of Christ to ensure freedom from error, for supposing that we had such catholic consent it could prove nothing in the point about which we are now inquiring, because its supposed authority rests upon the very truth in question. Catholic consent, to one who is yet unconvinced of this truth, is but the consent of a certain number of individuals, and he who says that he believes the divine mission of our Lord and his Apostles on such a ground, does in effect say that he believes the Christian religion because a certain number of persons believed it eighteen centuries ago, which would be as good a reason for believing any form of Paganism or Mohammedism.

This, therefore, is a truth, the proof of which extends over a much wider field than patristical tradition, and requires a much broader foundation than such tradition can supply it with.

We may, indeed, be indebted to patristical tradition as one and a necessary witness of the facts upon which *the external evidence* for Scripture being the Word of God is founded, but no assertions of Christian writers that the New Testament is a divine revelation can be *of themselves* any more a sufficient proof

that so it is, than the assertions of Mohammedan writers that the Koran came from God.

As this matter is of no little importance, let us consider it a little more carefully.

We are to believe this doctrine, say our opponents, on the testimony of ecclesiastical tradition. Nay, they tell us that we cannot prove it but by such tradition. Now, as we have already observed, our belief, in ecclesiastical tradition is claimed on two grounds, first, that it is a faithful witness of what the Apostles delivered orally, and secondly, on the ground that the promises of God forbid the supposition that the whole church should be in error on an important point.

Take, then, first, the case of an unbeliever, and suppose him to be told that he is bound to believe this truth on the evidence of ecclesiastical tradition. You, therefore, in effect tell him that he is bound to believe this truth, because those of whose character and inspiration he is in doubt affirmed it, (which by the way he could learn as well from their writings as from tradition,) and because in that very book whose divine origin is in question it is promised that Christians shall not universally err in such a point. A wonderfully convincing argument this truly!

The absurdity of the attempt to prove the true character of our Lord and his Apostles, upon which the inspiration of the New Testament depends, from that church-tradition, whose value as a teacher in the doctrines of religion has no foundation but that character to rely upon, is transparent.

Hence, perhaps, it is that the lovers of tradition are so lukewarm (to say the least) as to the distribution of the Scriptures to such. For it must be admitted that he who endeavours to teach men from the Scriptures (which blessed be God, is the great principle of Protestantism) must be prepared to prove that they are the word of God upon grounds that include much more than the Church's testimony in their favour.

And here is observable the great difference between the mode of teaching men advocated by our opponents and the Romanists, and that which corresponds with the great principle of Protestantism. Our opponents anxiously urge upon us the doctrine that we are to go to patristical tradition for what we teach men and that after we have so done, Scripture is to be resorted to as a parallel revelation to confirm us in the views derived from tradition.

The Fathers, however, to whom they are so fond of appealing, certainly took a different course, for they appealed to the Scriptures as the great teacher of mankind, and urged upon unbelievers the various evidences upon which their claim to divine authority rests, herein manifestly dissenting from our oppo-

nents, and showing that they regarded those evidences as sufficient to prove that divine authority.

The process of spiritual education, then, according to the notions of our opponents is this,—The learner is to be taught by the representative of the Church the traditions of the Church upon the subject of religion, and then when he has embraced the truths of Christianity upon the testimony of the Church, the Church delivers to him certain writings composed by those from whom she has originally derived the faith, and the learner having beforehand become a believer in the faith and a faithful disciple of the Church, receives those Scriptures as divine upon the testimony of the Church.

“When we say therefore,” our opponents may urge, “that it is church tradition by which alone we know that Scripture is the word of God, we are speaking of those who have been brought up in the bosom of the Church, or at least have been instructed by her,” i. e. in short (whether they proceed to so distinct an admission of the fact or not) believers, for men must be either believers or unbelievers, that is those who already believe in the divine mission of our Lord and his Apostles, and consequently that the revelation made by them came from God.

Now there can be no doubt that in the very earliest times of the Christian Church many did become acquainted with the revelation now contained in the Scriptures through the medium of that instruction which they received from ministers of the Church, who communicated to them the true unadulterated doctrine delivered by our Lord and his apostles. But even they did not believe its divine origin on the sole ground of church-tradition. Their belief was founded partly upon the internal evidence afforded by the power and excellence of the revelation, and partly upon those external testimonies which included much more than the teaching of the Church.

But to assume, what is taken for granted in the reasoning of our opponents just alluded to, that the true and unadulterated doctrine delivered by our Lord and his Apostles has been perpetuated in the Church by tradition to the present time, so that her pupils are instructed in that doctrine from tradition and not from Scripture, is to assume the very point which is in dispute, viz., that tradition is a safe medium for the conveyance of doctrinal matters. We deny the truth of this position, and maintain that had the truth been left to church tradition for its perpetuation, it would have required a miraculous interference on the part of God to have preserved it, and consequently that where the teaching of the Church is agreeable to Scripture, it is to Scripture that we are indebted as the means of its preservation, and that where that teaching goes beyond Scripture, no claim

can be justly made for it inspired teaching on account of the uncertainty of tradition.

We deny, therefore, the truth of the assumption here made, that the Church where she teaches the truth teaches from tradition. Church-tradition has not preserved the truth. The Scriptures have preserved it, and the Church, through the Scriptures, has been enabled to retain it. We consequently deny the inference here drawn from that assumption.

And, in fact, the main question upon which the inspiration of Scripture depends still recurs. For how, I would ask, was the pupil of the Church convinced that the religion preached to him by the Church came from God? The chief and necessary mean for that conviction was the power of the Spirit of God impressing it upon his heart and conscience, and this united with the internal evidence in its favour, is all of which nine-tenths of mankind would be capable. Have they not, then, equal proof in every respect for the divine origin of the same religion when they meet with it in the pages of Scripture? Is the teaching of the Church so superior to the teaching of the Apostolical writings, that the Christian religion commends itself to the consciences of men more in the former than in the latter? The evidence, then, whatever it be, which would induce men to receive the orthodox teaching of the Church as divine, is the evidence upon which they believe the divine origin of the religion delivered to us in the Holy Scriptures.

How, indeed, were many of the heathen in early times brought to a knowledge and belief of the Christian religion by the first Christian Missionaries, if the internal testimony united with the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart is not sufficient to produce faith in it? And if that testimony is sufficient, then the witness of Scripture does not absolutely require the evidence of history to produce faith in its declarations being a divine revelation. For surely the testimony of the Apostles in the New Testament is as efficient a preacher as any uninspired man can be.

True, it may be objected that even a proof of the divine origin of the truths delivered to us in the Scriptures does not strictly prove that those Scriptures were indited by inspired authors, but not to say that under the circumstances of the case it goes a long way towards it, the great and only essential point is, whether the truths delivered in it are of divine origin, whether the authors of those revelations contained in it were inspired. In a word, the great point in the question of the inspiration of Scripture is, whether the religion delivered in it is from God. And though the proof of this will not demonstrate the inspiration of the Scriptures, it is the most necessary part of the evidence for the proof of that truth, and the only thing necessary for salvation.

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The testimony, therefore, of the church or patristical tradition falls at least far short of a proof of the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture.

But although the internal evidence, united with the operations of the Spirit of God upon the heart, may be with the generality the great and almost sole proof, and with all a necessary part of the proof, of the divine origin of the religion delivered to us in the Scriptures, and consequently of the inspiration of the Scriptures, yet no doubt there is also powerful external evidence to this truth; and to the unassisted mind this external evidence is a necessary part of the proof of the inspiration of these particular writings, and an important part of the proof of the divine origin of the revelation contained in them, though not perhaps absolutely necessary when we consider the force of the internal evidence, which, I think, facts show us, is the great inducement to men to embrace the Christian faith.

Now, this external evidence to the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture and to the question of the extent of the inspired writings rests upon certain facts, the knowledge of which must be conveyed to us by the testimony of others. Here, then, patristical tradition necessarily comes in as an important part of that testimony. But even here it forms only a part of the testimony.

Let us now, then, proceed to observe what is the evidence we have, apart from the witness of the Spirit, to the inspiration of the Scriptures, a question which of course includes that of their canonicity, genuineness, and uncorrupted preservation, as we shall see in the course of the inquiry.

I will take the case of the New Testament only, as that is the one more particularly concerned in this controversy, and the inspiration of the New Testament being proved, the inspiration of the Old Testament easily follows.

I would observe, then, on this head, first, that it must be admitted that if we can establish the divine mission of our Lord, and the inspiration of his Apostles, it follows, that their instructions on the subject of religion are to be considered as the Word of God.

I am quite aware that this position will be disputed by some, who, in order to enhance the value of "tradition," do not regard it as a sufficient proof that a book is inspired, that it was written by an inspired Apostle, and therefore hold the necessity of "tradition," for assuring us that these particular productions of the Apostles were inspired. But I would ask, how was the distinction made between their inspired and uninspired productions? By what authority did they who formed the canon of Scripture decide that these productions only of the Apostles were inspired? Will it be said that there were other writings of the Apostles on

the subject of the Christian religion which were not inspired, or was it not the sole question with the Church, when admitting books bearing the Apostles' name into the canon, whether they were genuine? All that the Apostles delivered on the subject of religion, being delivered by persons divinely inspired, may be considered as the Word of God; and all that the primitive church ever imagined to be necessary to prove respecting the writings of the Apostles, when determining the extent of the canon, was their genuineness.

Suppose a work not included in the canon could be proved to have been written by one of the Apostles after the day of Pentecost, would any man who fully believed that it was written by an inspired Apostle, venture to say that he would not receive it because the Apostle might not have been inspired in writing it?

This question, as it appears to me, is one of prime importance in this matter. For if it be not admitted that all that the Apostles wrote on the subject of religion was divinely inspired, then what evidence have we that those particular productions of the Apostles included in the New Testament were inspired? We want, in that case, divine directions as to what productions of the Apostles were inspired, and what were not; and how is this to be obtained? The Romanists will reply,—from “tradition” and the authority of the Church. But if by “tradition” they mean the oral teaching of the Apostles, I reply that we have not the slightest evidence that the Apostles ever did claim for those particular productions of theirs any greater authority than for the rest of their instructions; and that the internal testimony of their writings shows that they entertained no such idea. It is quite true that they spoke sometimes by permission, and not by commandment, and gave advice for which they did not claim the direct sanction of the Holy Spirit; but this is no proof that they were not at all times guided by that Spirit when formally delivering the doctrines and precepts of Christianity.

Moreover, the language of the Fathers clearly shows that they considered it to be only necessary to prove that a book or doctrine came from an Apostle, to prove its inspiration and authority;¹ and that, when determining the canon of Scripture, the

¹ See Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. cap. 24 and 25. (ed. Vales.) See also ch. 38, where the canonicity of the Epistle to the Hebrews is evidently supposed to be proved if there is reason to think that it was written by St. Paul; and particularly the language of Serapion (lib. vi. c. 12.) where speaking of some writings falsely ascribed to Peter, he says, “we receive Peter and the rest of the Apostles as we would Christ, but we reject the writings falsely ascribed to them.” And this clearly follows from the way in which the books that were to be received as of authority in the Christian church are constantly mentioned by the early Christian writers, who describe them as the Gospels and the *Epistles of the Apostles*, the *Evangelical* and *Apostolical* Scriptures. And so Jerome says

sole question with them was what writings they had, composed by the Apostles, or at least under their immediate superintendence and sanction; and, as I shall prove hereafter, that they regarded no books as of authority but those that were so composed.

And if you say it is from the testimony or authority of the Church, you claim for the Church a degree of inspiration greater than that you allow to the Apostles, for you can only attach certainty to the decision of the Church by supposing that the Church is permanently inspired to deliver the truth, while you allow not such permanent inspiration to the Apostles.

It may be a matter for consideration how far that inspiration extended, and we know from facts which they have themselves stated, that it did not ensure them infallibility in all respects and all matters, but we are now considering them merely as instructors in the Christian religion. The common objection derived from the reproof given to Peter by Paul, is well disposed of by Tertullian.¹

Observe, also, in what situation it places their favourite doctrine of "tradition," if they say that, to prove the inspiration of the Scriptures, it is not sufficient to prove the inspiration of their authors. For then how are we assured that that which the Church professes to derive by "tradition" from the oral teaching of the Apostles was inspired? It is not sufficient evidence in this case for the authority of such tradition, even to suppose that it is an infallibly true report of what the Apostles delivered; but we must suppose that there is also some evidence or authority somewhere to assure us, that those particular instructions of the Apostles, which patristical tradition is said to have handed down to us, were delivered by inspiration, and I would ask where that evidence or authority can be found. There was certainly no claim made by the primitive Church to distinguish between the doctrines or instructions delivered by the Apostles, so as to decide which was delivered by inspiration and which not. If the Apostles are not always safe guides in their *instructions on the subject of religion*, where are we to look for such guides? for I suspect that most men will be disposed to think, that if the Apostles were not always to be trusted in their instructions, neither is the Church; for certainly, neither the promises made to the latter, nor its history, give stronger ground for confiding in it than

of St. John, that he was "both an Apostle, an Evangelist, and a Prophet; an Apostle in that he wrote to the churches as a master," &c. (Joannes et Apostolus et Evangelista et Propheta. Apostolus quia scripsit ad Ecclesias ut magister, &c. Adv. Jovinian. lib. i. § 26. tom. ii. col. 279. ed. Vall. Venn.)

¹ Adv. Marc. lib. c. iv. 3. and De Præscr. cc. 23, 24.

the promises made to the former, and their history, do for confiding in them.

As far, then, as concerns the books of the New Testament which we can prove to have been written by the Apostles, a proof of the divine mission of our Lord, and the inspiration of his Apostles, will equally prove that the Scriptures of the Apostles are to be viewed as the word of God. And this I take to be the only way of proving the inspiration of *all* that they have delivered on the subject of religion; for it is evident that the inspiration of each sentence could not be separately proved by any application of internal and external evidence, and can only be deduced from a proof of the inspiration of the author, that is, his being recognized as a teacher commissioned and empowered by God to instruct mankind in true religion.

Besides the Scriptures of the Apostles, three books only, viz. the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles by Luke, have been admitted into the canon of the New Testament. Their case we shall consider distinctly; our present inquiry relates only to the writings of the Apostles.

It is affirmed, that many ages ago there appeared on earth those who professed to be authorized by God to instruct mankind in the nature of true religion. We inquire, then, what evidence is producible in favour of this claim, in order that if it be a just claim we may guide ourselves by their instructions.

The first question, then, will surely be, what was their doctrine, what the nature of their instructions? The internal evidence may be an insufficient witness, standing alone, to prove the divine origin of their doctrine, but its witness is material to rational beings. The answer to this question we shall naturally look for in those *writings* which have come down to us, attributed to them, and professing to give an account of their doctrine; and our first inquiry must of course be, are these writings *genuine* and *incorrupt*?

It does not, of course, enter into my design here to point out at length the whole of the evidence on these and other points connected with our present inquiry, as such a discussion would be both out of place and unnecessary, after what has been already published on the subject,¹ and would require a volume to do any justice to it; but chiefly to point out the *character* of the evidence we have on these points, in order to show where and how far church-tradition comes in.

On what grounds, then, may we receive these writings as *genuine*, that is, as written by those whose names they bear?

¹ See the works of Leslie, Addison, Jenkin, Stillingfleet, Lardner, Paley, and others, and especially Mr. Horne's very valuable "Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures."

We have, *first*, the *internal evidence* afforded by the writings themselves. It cannot be denied, that from the language, style, and general character of the contents of these writings, we have strong evidence in favour of their being genuine.

We have, *secondly*, the *external evidence*.

And here we naturally look, first, to the testimony borne in their favour by the Christian writers, or, in other words, to patristical tradition. There has been a series of writers in the Christian Church from the earliest times, who have all acknowledged the genuineness of these writings; i. e. with some exceptions, to which we shall advert presently: and considering the way in which these writings have been handed down from one to another, this is a strong argument in their favour.

Here, however, let me caution the reader against a statement of Mr. Keble, that as long as the canon of the New Testament was incomplete, the doctrinal "tradition" existing in the Church of the oral teaching of the Apostles, was "divinely appointed in the Church as the *touchstone* of canonical Scripture itself." (p. 27.) This statement he attempts to prove by the admonition of St. Paul to the Galatians, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto *you*, let him be anathema," (Gal. i. 8.); and from 1 John ii. 7; 20, 21, 27; iv. 1; 3. 2 John 9. Here is another instance of what our opponents are so fond of, an assumption of the very point in question. The warnings here given are against the *hearers of the Apostles themselves* believing anything contrary to the doctrine which they had been taught by *the Apostles themselves* (and who ever denied that their oral teaching was of authority?) Therefore, says Mr. Keble, *tradition*, i. e. the *report* of that teaching handed down from one to another, was "divinely appointed as the touchstone of canonical Scripture," and adds to this extraordinary nonsequitur the following as extraordinary flourish about it. "This use of apostolical tradition may well correct the *presumptuous irreverence* of disparaging the *Fathers*, under plea of magnifying Scripture. Here is a TRADITION so highly honoured by the Almighty Founder and Guide of the Church, as to be made the *standard* and *rule* of his own Divine Scriptures. *The very writings of the Apostles were to be first tried by it before they could be incorporated into the canon.* Thus the Scriptures themselves, as it were, do homage to the *tradition* of the Apostles; the despisers therefore, of that *tradition* [as if any one did despise the oral teaching of the Apostles, and that the question was not merely whether we have got that teaching or not] take part inadvertently or profanely with the despisers of the Scripture itself." (p. 28.)

Solemn words these, certainly, and as our friends across the

Atlantic say, "important if true;" but all their apparent force arises from his having confounded the real tradition or teaching of the Apostles with the report of it by others. And then, adds Mr. Keble, "on the other hand, it is no less evident, that Scripture, being once ascertained, became in *its turn* a test for every thing claiming to be of Apostolical tradition." And so tradition having been in one generation the touchstone of Scripture, the obligation was returned in the next, by Scripture saying this or that is tradition; and thus they mutually assisted one another. But it would be worth knowing why, if tradition could be so depended upon in one generation as the touchstone for ascertaining what was Scripture, there should be any need in the next of Scripture to point out what was tradition. This looks very much as if there was a lurking consciousness that, after all, tradition stood upon a somewhat slippery footing.

But enough of such statements. How stands the real state of the case? The writings of the Apostles were either given in person or sent by trusty messengers to the converts of the writers. In the latter case (though it can hardly even then be said that the oral teaching of the Apostles was "the touchstone" of such a writing) no doubt the writing would not have been received if it had contained anything clearly contrary to the oral teaching of the Apostles. But there, at least, their office of judging ended, and the question of the genuineness of the writings was *set at rest and determined by those who were contemporary with the Apostles*, and had heard them preach, and were in fact their own converts. And it appears from 2 Thess. iii. 15, that St. Paul adopted a particular mode of signature to his epistles that might be a mark of their genuineness. "The salutation of me Paul," he says, "with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle, so I write." And the writings thus *admitted* and acknowledged as genuine (and the *originals* of most, if not all of them, long preserved in the archives of the Apostolical churches) were handed down from one to another, and hence found their way into the universal church as writings of acknowledged authority.¹ And if, in after times, a question arose about any particular book or books professing to come from the Apostles, the inquiry was, Can it be traced up to the Apostles through the testimonies of those who have preceded us,² and a comparison was instituted between it and the *undoubted* writings of the Apostles.³ If the book could be plainly traced up to an Apostle, there was an end to the question. If it could not be so traced

¹ See Tertull. De Præscr. c. 36 and adv. Marc. iv. 5.

² See Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. cc. 3 and 25.

³ See Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iii. 25, and Tertull. adv. Marc. iv. 2. Denique, &c.

up, even though it might not be contrary to Apostolical doctrine, its canonicity would be proportionably doubtful. And hence it was that doubts were entertained by *some* in the primitive church as to the canonicity of some of those books which were afterwards admitted into the canon by, generally speaking, the universal church; admitted evidently not by "the touchstone" of tradition, for I suppose that tradition was, at least, not more certain, or definite, or authoritative, at the close of the fourth century, when the first canon of any General Council, giving a catalogue of the canonical books, was passed at Laodicea,¹ than it was in the earlier periods of the church, nor could a Council *make* that catholic consent to which alone authority is *ascribed* where it did not *find* it, but because it was generally considered that the evidence for their genuineness was such as to entitle them to a place in the canon. And I must say that the recollection of those early doubts (though unwarranted doubts) might have saved Luther from the opprobrium sometimes cast upon him by those who love to bark at the reformers for doubting at one time as to the canonicity of a book about which some in the early church also doubted. The notion, therefore, of any Father, or collection of Fathers, setting themselves up in the purer times of the church to judge of the canonicity of writings professing to come from the Apostles by the touchstone of a doctrinal "*tradition*," is utterly unwarranted.

Now, to return to our subject, this testimony of Christian antiquity to the genuineness of these writings is both important and necessary. Its absence indeed would be fatal. But is it all we have, or is it even alone sufficient? If the heretics, and the Jewish and heathen adversaries of Christianity had all from the beginning denied the genuineness of these books, would it have been a satisfactory state of things? We must inquire, then, what their testimony was, and we find a *still stronger* proof of the genuineness of these writings in the testimonies of the heretics and the Jewish and heathen adversaries of Christianity.

I do not mean to say that *all* the *heretics* universally admitted the genuineness of all the books of the New Testament as we now have them, because some of them rejected some books and others other books. But taking them as a body, the argument derived from their testimony to the genuineness of Scripture, even in parts opposed to their notions, is a very strong one, and as such it was applied long ago by Irenæus,—"So great certainty is there," he says, "with regard to these Gospels, that the very heretics themselves bear witness to them, and every one of them endeavours to confirm his doctrine out of them. For the

¹ This catalogue included all that we receive but the book of Revelations.

Ebionites who use the Gospel of Matthew only, are by that very Gospel refuted as in error respecting the Lord. And Marcion, who mutilates the Gospel of Luke, is proved a blasphemer against the one true God by those parts which are retained by him. And they who separate Jesus from Christ, and say that Christ did not suffer but that Jesus suffered, preferring the Gospel of Mark, may be convinced of their error by reading *that* with a love of the truth. And the Valentinians using the Gospel of John entire in order to prove their conjunctions, may be proved by it to be in error, as we have shown in the first book. *Since therefore they who oppose us give their testimony to these [i. e. the four Gospels] and use them, our proof derived from them is firm and trustworthy.*"¹

From this passage, then, it is evident that even at that early period Irenæus considered that patristical tradition was but a part of the proof of the genuineness, &c. of Scripture, and that an important part of it consisted in the testimony of others, of those who might be considered more independent and impartial witnesses.

Moreover, that the testimony of the heretics as a body was in favour of Scripture as a whole follows from the very complaint so frequently made by the Romanists and our opponents,—a complaint no doubt justified to some extent by fact, and supported by the Fathers,—that the heretics were in the habit of appealing to Scripture in support of their views.

We have next to inquire whether these writings as we now possess them are in an *incorrupt state*.

Here, again, it is natural to observe, first, the care of the church with regard to them. The early Christians would no doubt be exceedingly solicitous to preserve these writings incorrupt. The originals seem long to have been preserved with great care in the custody, not of any private individual, but of the archives of the churches, and copies were taken by persons approved by the church. Moreover, the earliest preachers of Christianity took great care to have copies dispersed everywhere and left with their converts.² And numerous translations were made in very early times,³ some of which remain to this day.

But church-tradition strictly speaking has nothing to do with the matter. We want only fidelity and accuracy in *copying*,

¹ Iren. adv. hæres. lib. iii. c. xi. Ed. Grabe, p. 220. Ed. Mass. tom. i. pp. 189, 190.

² See Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iii. 37.

³ Aug. De doctr. Christ. lib. ii. c. 5. ed. Ben. tom. iii. p. 1, col. 21. Chrys. in Joh. hom. ii. (al. 1.) ed. Ben. tom. viii. p. 10. Theodoret. De cur. Græc. affect. lib. v. ed. Schulze, tom. iv. pp. 839, 840.

and handing down these writings themselves in an incorrupt state to the next age, and this a deaf and dumb person could do as well as any one else. It is obviously a very different thing to hand down to posterity certain written documents and to hand down reports of oral teaching. Written records left in the keeping of a Bishop, and handed down by each to his successor (as the Scriptures were in early times) must surely be looked upon in a *very* different light to oral reports of what this or that former Bishop of the Diocese had preached.

And over and above this we have *still stronger* testimony in favour of the incorrupt state of these writings in various other ways; viz. in the *number* and *antiquity* of the copies and their being found *in all parts of the world*, all agreeing with each other in all essential points, in the *antient versions*, in the *similarity* of their contents to the accounts given of them by the earliest Fathers, and the *quotations* from them in those Fathers, and also in the testimony borne to them by the great body of the *heretics*, whose evidence tends to substantiate, some one part, some another, of the sacred volume, and lastly in the *quotations* and references made *by the enemies of Christianity*.

But notwithstanding we have all this evidence (of the strength of which we can form no idea without following it out into its details) in favour of the genuineness and incorrupt state of these writings, and that the question as to the preservation of written documents is *essentially* different to that which respects the preservation of oral teaching, Mr. Newman coolly tells us, that "whatever explanations the Protestant in question makes in behalf of the preservation of the written word will be found applicable in the theory to the unwritten." (p. 46.) As well might it be said, that one who heard a report that had passed through a multitude of hands of a discourse orally delivered was as likely to be accurately informed respecting it, as he who had had delivered to him through the same number of hands a written copy of the discourse actually delivered. Even were it true that we depended solely on patristical tradition for the incorrupt state of the sacred books, that would not afford the slightest proof that such tradition was to be depended upon for accurate information as to the oral teaching of the Apostles.

The argument is as usual taken from the Romish armoury. "They," says the Jesuit Fisher, "that can deliver by uniform tradition a false sense, why may they not also deliver a false text as received from the Apostles? an argument convincing and unanswerable." To which our learned Bishop White thus replies. "The Jesuit imagineth that this argument is invincible. But let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off The argument reduced to form will discover

its own weakness. 'If the text of the Scripture may as easily be corrupted as the sense, then all they which can deliver by uniform tradition a false sense may also deliver a false text. But the text of the Scripture may as easily be corrupted as the sense. Ergo, all they which can deliver by uniform tradition a false sense may also deliver a false text.' The assumption of this syllogism, which although it were concealed by the Paralogist, yet it must be added to make the argument perfect, is *apparently false*, and the contrary is true. The text of the Scripture cannot so easily be corrupted as the sense, and therefore it is not necessary that they which following human tradition or their own invention may deliver a false sense shall likewise deliver a false text. First, the text of the Scripture is contained in records and books which are dispersed throughout the whole Christian world, and preserved in all churches, and the copies and transcripts of them are innumerable Secondly, when God Almighty would have the knowledge and memory of things to be perpetual he commanded that they should be committed to writing. Exod. xvii. 14, and xxxiv. 27. Deut. xxxi. 19. Thirdly, experience of all ages testifieth that the text of the Scripture hath been preserved inviolable even among Jews and heretics. Fourthly, whereas the Jesuit compareth unanimous tradition of the sense of Scripture with the written letter and text of the Scripture, *unless he equivocate in the name, terming that tradition which is collected from the Scripture*, such uniform tradition as he boasteth of is very rare; for it must be such as in all ages and in all orthodoxal churches hath been the same. Now *the most undoubted and uniform* tradition of all other is concerning the number and integrity of the books of holy Scripture, and yet *in this difference hath been* between one church and another, and the later Roman church disagreeeth with the antient."¹ And so elsewhere he says, "It is not necessary that they which truly deliver the text shall also truly deliver the Apostolical sense, and on the contrary a lying sense may be delivered by them which retain the true and incorrupt letter of the text, as appeareth by the Pharisees, Arians, Donatists, and many other heretics."²

And so Augustine points out, in a passage already quoted, on what a different ground the Holy Scriptures stand in this respect to any other writings, and consequently to the sources whence our opponents' traditive statements and interpretations are derived; the writings of no bishop, however illustrious, being ca-

¹ Reply to Jesuit Fisher's Answer to certain questions. pp. 123—5.

² Ib. pp. 120, 121. Bishop White is one of the divines of the "Anglo-Catholic Library."

pable of being preserved as the canonical Scripture is preserved on account of the number of languages in which it is found, and its being constantly rehearsed in the church, which rendered any attempt at corruption or forgery useless.¹

It may be well to inquire in the next place, what evidence we have that these writings are *authentic*; that is, that the facts related in them, really took place. A consideration of this evidence will lead the mind more easily to the great point which we have to consider afterwards, the great truth sought to be established.

We have, then, for this truth, first, the internal evidence of these writings themselves. The facts related are not such as men are likely to have feigned; they are frequently injurious to the character of the writers; there was no reasonable motive for such a fiction, for it led the authors only into temporal calamities and death; and many similar weighty considerations conspire to show the truth of the facts stated.

We have next the external evidence; first, that derived from the church. But this is not church-tradition, but merely the *fact* of the belief of these books by so many, at a time, when, if the events recorded in them had not been true, they would have obtained no credit; secondly, that derived from the witness of heretics, and also from the numerous and direct testimonies afforded by the Jews and heathen, the enemies of Christianity, that the chief events here recorded did really happen.

To these evidences may be added further those considerations which show us the *credibility* of the statements of Scripture; such, for instance, as prove the credibility of miracles, remove apparent contradictions, and show that there is nothing in these writings *contrary* to reason; none of which, however, as is evident, can be derived at all from church-tradition.

In all these preliminary points, then, there is one only in which patristical tradition, properly speaking, can aid us; and that is, on the question of the genuineness of the Scriptures; and there, though important and necessary as *part* of the proof, we have other and still more unexceptionable testimony.

Supposing, then, that the Scriptures we possess are *genuine*, *incorrupt*, *authentic*, and *credible*, we have next to inquire, what evidence we have that they may be reckoned the word of God; which, as we have already observed, is tantamount to the inquiry what evidence we have of the divine mission of our Lord and the inspiration of his Apostles; or at least a proof of the latter will equally demonstrate the former.

Let us begin with the divine mission of our blessed Lord.

¹ See pp. 200, 201 above.

Now to go to church-tradition for any *direct* proof of this, or of the inspiration of the Apostles, is obviously absurd; for if there were no foundation for these truths, any, even the highest, degree of catholic consent, would have no real weight; for all the value that can be *ascribed* to it in this case, rests, upon the supposition that these are truths. The only weight, therefore, which church-tradition can have in these points, is from its being the representation of the opinion of a vast number of individuals, who, from the time of the appearance of our Lord to this, have held that these are truths, which may reasonably be an *introductory* motive¹ to belief in them, rendering their truth in some degree *probable*, but nothing more; for the same evidence is afforded to Mohammedism and Paganism.

The truth we are now seeking to establish, rests upon two sorts of evidence, *external* and *internal*.

The *external* consists chiefly of the evidence derived from the four following sources.

(1) The voice from heaven at our Lord's baptism, and at his transfiguration.

(2) The miracles he wrought; especially as connected with the character of his doctrine.

(3) The prophecies of the Old Testament fulfilled in him, and his own recorded in the New Testament.

(4) The power and success of the Gospel, notwithstanding its opposition to the feelings and desires of the natural mind.

To enlarge upon these points, and show the *demonstrative* nature of the proof derived from them, is not now our object. It has been done over and over again, far more ably than we could hope to do it. But we have to point out upon what *testimony* this external evidence rests, and to show how little church-tradition has to do with it.

For the *first*, then, we have the testimony of the Apostles in their writings (already shown to be *genuine* and *authentic*) recognized by Celsus, the great enemy of Christianity. This affords at least some *probable* evidence of the divine mission of our Lord.

For the *second*, that is, our Lord's miracles, we have the testimony, not only of the Apostles, but what is more, of his great *enemies*, the Jews; and that not merely as recorded by the Apostles, but by *their own writers*, and also of heathen writers.

For the *third*, we have for the existence of the prophecies fulfilled in him, long previous to his incarnation, the irrefutable evidence of the books of the Old Testament, then and still in the keeping of his great enemies, the Jews; and for those uttered by

¹ See Land's Conf. with Fisher, and Stillingfleet's Grounds, &c. pp. 187, 8.

him, the testimony (already proved to be authentic) of his Apostles, and for their fulfilment, as regards the Jews, the universally-received attestations of history, as well as the evidence of their present state.

For the *fourth*, we have the testimony, both of friends and enemies, and of our own senses.

The reader may at once see, then, how far we have to depend upon church-tradition for this evidence.

The *internal* evidence is derived from the excellent nature and effects of the doctrine which our Lord taught. The appeal here is to the hearts and consciences of mankind; and however those who have been accustomed from infancy to enjoy its light, may slight the evidence which its brilliancy affords of its divine origin, it was looked upon at its advent, by those who could appreciate it, in a very different light. By the early teachers of Christianity, this was the great evidence put forward in proof of its divine origin; an evidence, of which time cannot weaken the force, and which, as it appears to me, still remains the most powerful inducement to men to embrace the Christian faith, the most convincing argument of its divine origin. It is quite true that the prepossessions of the natural mind may often lead it into error, when so judging; but that is due, not to the character of the evidence from which the judgment is formed, but to the corruption of our fallen nature. It is no more a proof that Christianity does not show its origin by the internal evidence it carries with it, than heretical misallegations of Scripture show that Scripture does not bear a clear testimony in favour of the orthodox faith.

There is one observation, however, I would make respecting it; and that is, that it appears to me to be applicable only in proof of the divine mission of the *Founder* of our religion; because that religion, when once introduced, might be preached by many who were entirely destitute both of inspiration and divine commission to do so. The evidence of the internal witness of Scripture to its divine inspiration, is, I conceive, of this kind; viz., that the revelation made, taken as a whole, is so excellent in its nature and effects, as to bear a powerful witness to its divine origin, and consequently to the divine mission of Him who first delivered it to mankind; not that the internal evidence can be a sure criterion as to any particular book to establish its inspiration; though it may, in some cases, be sufficient to negative it.

Thus, then, do we establish the divine mission of our Lord; and consequently the truth that what he delivered was the word of God.

But then, it becomes necessary to inquire what were the quali-

fications of those who have *delivered* his doctrine to us. Though we may suppose that they were honest and faithful narrators of events, have we any assurance that they were preserved from error in delivering that doctrine to us, and still more in enlarging upon, and explaining, and adding to that doctrine? If, indeed, we agreed with the Romanists and our opponents, that fallible men could convey to us a "practically infallible" report of doctrinal truths, we need not, as far as our Lord's teaching was concerned, have made any further inquiry; but (and I shall leave to our opponents to give the reason) it certainly appears that even as to this, we have not been left to the teaching of mere fallible men.

We have proof that *the Apostles were inspired*; and this fact, which may be proved by their miracles connected with the character of their teaching, may show that when we assumed in the proof of the divine mission of our Lord that their writings were *authentic*, we had not merely the proof of it already given, but a stronger in their inspiration.

Assuming, however, that the evidence adduced on the former points has been conclusive, we ground the doctrine of their inspiration, on the following evidence.

- (1) The promises of our Lord.
- (2) The affirmations of the Apostles in their writings.
- (3) The miracles they wrought, especially as connected with the character of the doctrine they preached, showing that they were to be depended upon.
- (4) The prophecies they delivered.

In the *first* of these, I refer to such promises as that recorded in John xvi. 13, that the Spirit should guide them into all truth, and see John xx. 21, 22; in the *second*, to such declarations as that of St. Paul, when he says to the Thessalonians, "When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh, also, in you that believe;" (1 Thess. ii. 13.) and those of St. Peter, where he says to the Christians of his day, that the gospel had been preached unto them with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, (1 Pet. i. 12,) and exhorts them to be "mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour," (2 Pet. iii. 2,) and ranks St. Paul's writings with the "other Scriptures," (2 Pet. iii. 16;) and generally to the tone of authority in which they speak, as infallible expositors of the doctrines of Christianity.

To give weight to the evidence derived from these two sources, we must, of course, assume the divine mission of our Lord, and also that the Apostles were not impostors; for which we must refer

back to the proof of the authenticity of their writings; or we may ground it upon that which we have now to notice as

The *third*, and an independent and still stronger testimony to their character, viz., the *miracles* they wrought, especially when we consider the nature of the doctrine they preached. These may not perhaps be a *direct* proof of the inspiration of all which they delivered on the subject of religion, but they certainly show their true character, and are a divine attestation to the truth of their claim to be considered divinely-appointed teachers of mankind. By these God *bare witness* to them. (Heb. ii. 4.)

Now the testimony upon which we believe these miracles to have been wrought, is derived—*first*, from the account left us *in writing* by one of the followers of the Apostles; I mean the book of the Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke, of which the genuineness, authenticity, &c. may be established, as in the case of the Apostolical Scriptures; and *secondly*, from the admissions of *Jews* and *heathens*, who were compelled to resort to the charge of magical practices against them, to account for the miracles they performed.

The *fourth* ground is that afforded us by the prophetic spirit vouchsafed to them, the evidence of which we see not only in the Scriptures, but in events confessedly subsequent to their times.

On these grounds, then, we believe that the Apostles were inspired, and being thus divinely preserved from error, and instructed in the truth, were both infallible witnesses of the doctrine taught by our Lord, and infallible instructors of mankind in religion.

We thus establish, then, the truth in question, viz. the divine mission of our Lord, and the inspiration of his Apostles, and consequently that the Scriptures of the Apostles are the word of God. And whenever a strict proof of this truth is sought, it must be of this kind and nature. And, as is evident, the sole use of church-tradition in it is to bear witness to us, who live at a considerable distance of time from the period in which Christianity was first promulgated, of certain *facts* cognizable by the senses of mankind, matters which *in the first instance* were not objects of *faith* but of *knowledge*, not revelations of doctrine in which fallible men are so likely to make mistakes, but facts such as neither friend or foe, if honest, could make any mistake about; and further, the tradition of the church is only a part, and not the strongest part, of the proof of those facts and events having taken place.

There now remains, then, for consideration, the case of those three books, the authors of which were not Apostles, viz. the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles by Luke.¹

¹ If the Epistle to the Hebrews is not allowed to be St. Paul's, (though there

And here I wish to draw attention to a fact which appears to me to have almost if not quite escaped observation, but which the general language of the Fathers on the subject, and particularly a passage of Tertullian, seem clearly to prove, namely, that the rule by which the canon of the New Testament was formed was this, that such works only should be admitted into it as were either written by Apostles or directly commended to the Church by them for its guidance and instruction. The passage of Tertullian to which I allude is one in his 4th book against Marcion, where being about to prove that the Gospel received by Marcion was spurious and of no authority, he says, "We lay it down in the first place that the volume containing the authoritative records of the Gospel, (*evangelicum instrumentum*) has the Apostles for its authors, upon whom this office of publishing the Gospel was imposed by our Lord himself; if besides these it admits *Apostolical* writers, it admits not such in their own character alone, but as associated with the Apostles, and as inferior to the Apostles, since the preaching of the disciples might be suspected of being influenced by the desire of glory if *the authority of the masters should not be affixed to it*, or rather the authority of Christ which *made the Apostles masters*. In fine, John and Matthew of the Apostles instil the faith into us, Luke and Mark of apostolical men renew the faith already imparted," &c. (1) And further on he adds,—“If the teacher himself of Luke, [i. e. St. Paul,] sought the authority of those that were Apostles before him, both for his faith and preaching, [alluding to St. Paul's going up to Jerusalem soon after his conversion to see the Apostles,] *how much more should I require that authority for the Gospel of Luke which was necessary for the Gospel of his Master?*” (2) Nothing I think can be more clear than that these passages fully show that, in the opinion of Tertullian, nothing was to be received into the canon of the New Testament, but that which had an Apostle for its author, or had received direct Apostolical sanction. And this is very much confirmed by what Jerome says, in the passage quoted from him a few pages back; that John was “an

is as appears to me satisfactory evidence that it is,) it must be added to the above.

(1) *Constituimus in primis, Evangelicum Instrumentum Apostolos auctores habere, quibus hoc munus Evangelii promulgandi ab ipso Domino sit impositum. Si et Apostolicos, non tamen solos, sed cum Apostolis et post Apostolos. Quoniam prædicatio discipulorum suspecta fieri posset de gloriæ studio, si non assistat illi auctoritas magistrorum, immo Christi, qui magistros Apostolos fecit Denique nobis fidem ex Apostolis Johannes Matthæus insinuant, ex Apostolicis Lucas et Marcus intaurant.* TERTULL. Adv. Marc. iv. 2. Ed. 1664. p. 414.

(2) *Igitur ei ipse illuminator Lucæ auctoritatem antecessorum et fidei et prædicationi suæ optavit, quanto magis eum Evangelio Lucæ expostulem quæ Evangelio magistri ejus fuit necessaria?* Id. ib.

Apostle, inasmuch as he wrote Epistles to the churches as a master."

The fancy, therefore, of some persons, that the early church, that is, a certain number of its rulers, took upon themselves to decide whether this man or that, this work or that, was inspired, has no place but in their own imaginations.

Such was the principle, then, upon which the primitive Church acted in forming the canon; and accordingly we find in the Fathers a recognition of this principle, in their having taken care to inform us that these books received Apostolical sanction.

Thus of St. Mark's Gospel it is said by Tertullian, that it may be considered as Peter's (*Preti adfirmetur*), whose interpreter Mark was;¹ by Eusebius, that the hearers of Peter, at Rome, "earnestly entreated Mark, Peter's follower, whose gospels is extant at this day, that he would leave with them some written record of that doctrine they had heard; neither did they desist till they had prevailed with the man; and thus they gave the occasion of writing that gospel which is called the Gospel according to Mark. When the Apostle Peter understood by the revelation of the Holy Spirit what was done, he was much delighted with the ardent desire of the men, and *confirmed that writing by his authority, that so thenceforward it should be read in the churches*;"² which account Eusebius gives from Clement of Alexandria, and says that Papias had borne the same testimony.³ The same thing is stated by Origen,⁴ Jerome, the author of the Synopsis attributed to Athanasius, Cosmas Indicopleustes, Nicephorus, and Eutychius of Alexandria.⁵ And there is a passage in the Second Epistle of Peter, which seems strongly to indicate an intention of leaving behind him some written record of the gospel he had preached, where he says, "I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." (2 Pet. i. 15.)

Of St. Luke's gospel it is said by Tertullian, that it was "customarily ascribed to Paul;"⁶ and in the passage quoted above, that it owed its authority to Apostolical sanction; and by Origen it is called "the gospel commended by Paul;"⁷ and by Eusebius it is said, "They say also that Paul was wont to mean the Gospel according to St. Luke, when, speaking as it were of his

¹ Tertull. Adv. Marc. lib. iv. c. 5. p. 416.

² Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. ii. c. 15.

³ See Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. ult., and lib. vi. c. 14.

⁴ Euseb. H. E. vi. 25.

⁵ See these testimonies in Lardner's Suppl. to his Credibility. Works, vol. v. pp. 332, &c.

⁶ Lucas digestum Paulo adscribere solent. Adv. Marc. iv. 5. p. 416.

⁷ Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vi. 25.

own gospel, he says, 'According to my Gospel;' and by Nicephorus, that it was published by the direction of Paul, and by the author of the Synopsis attributed to Athanasius, that it was dictated by Paul.¹

Of both these Gospels, also, it is said by Eusebius, that they, together with that by St. Matthew, were shown to St. John, who "approved of them, and confirmed the truth thereof by his own testimony."²

The gospel of St. Luke particularly needs some such testimony to it to give it authority, as St. Luke himself only professes (as it appears to me) to give the accounts that had been furnished him by others who had been eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word.³

With respect to the Acts of the Apostles, we have not the same *express* testimony to its having received Apostolical sanction, excepting in the Synopsis attributed to Athanasius, where it is said to have been dictated by Peter;⁴ and as it seems probable that both his Gospel and the Acts were written nearly about the same time, and while Paul was at Rome, (whose companion and disciple more especially Luke was,) it is not improbable that the former part of the Book of the Acts might be Peter's dictation, though not the latter, which relates to scenes witnessed not by Peter but by Paul and Luke himself. The principle, however, being established by the passage of Tertullian above quoted, that the works of Apostolical men needed the sanction of an Apostle to establish their canonicity, it is not absolutely necessary for us to have direct testimony to the fact, knowing the principle upon which the primitive Church went in recognizing its canonicity. And still further, we have in St. Augustine a very clear though indirect testimony, that such was the ground upon which all these three books, the Acts included, were admitted into the Canon. For speaking of the Gospel of St. Luke, he says, "But he [Luke] has not only brought down his narrative to the resurrection and ascension of the Lord, so as to have a place worthy his labour among the four authors of the Evangelical Scripture, but also afterwards so wrote the things that were done by the Apostles,—those things, that is, which he considered to be sufficient for establishing the faith of those who read or heard them,—that his book alone was considered trustworthy in the Church, in its account of the acts of the Apostles, all those being rejected who dared to give an unfaithful account of the acts and

¹ Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. 4. (ed. Val.)

² See Lardner as above, pp. 352, &c. And see Iren. lib. iii. c. 14.

³ Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. 24.

⁴ Luke i. 1—3.

⁵ Synops. Script. Sacr. n. 76. Athan. Op. tom. ii. p. 202. ed. Bened.

sayings of the Apostles. *Because* (quippe) Mark and Luke wrote at a time at which they could be sanctioned, not only by the Church of Christ but also *by the Apostles themselves yet remaining in the flesh.*"¹

Such, then, being the principle upon which the canonicity of these books was admitted by the primitive Church, we, admitting that principle, have only to inquire whether we have sufficient testimony to induce us to believe that the Apostles did commend them to the Church for its guidance and instruction; and for this we have the fact of their admission into the canon by the universal Church from the earliest times, as books that had received that sanction (for this, as we have shown, was considered necessary for such admission) united with the direct testimony borne to their having received that sanction by many of the Fathers of the Church. And *after* we have received the writings of the Apostles as inspired, I know no reason why we should hesitate to admit this testimony as sufficient, seeing the congruity of their statements with the revelation we have already admitted, to entitle them to a place in the canon; for all that we want to know is the *fact* that they received Apostolical sanction.

If our opponents tell us that we are not able to judge of their statements by "tradition," I would remind them of the way in which Tertullian proved, in his controversy with Marcion, the uncorrupted preservation of his copy of St. Luke's Gospel. "If," saith he, "the Apostolical Gospels have come down to us uncorrupted, and our copy of Luke's Gospel has such *congruency with their rule* as to remain with them in the churches, then it is clear that Luke's Gospel has come down to us uncorrupted until Marcion's sacrilege."² If this argument is valid, then it neither was nor is necessary to go to tradition to judge of the internal evidence of these books, (which Mr. Keble would fain persuade us was the great test in the admission of books into the canon); but a comparison of them with the Apostolical, will show a *congruency with their rule*, and this is all that the internal evidence can do with respect to such books.

If asked, then, upon what grounds I receive any one of the *Apostolical* books of the New Testament to be inspired, (for

¹ *Iste autem non solum, &c.* Eo quippe tempore scripserunt Marcus et Lucas, quo non solum ab Ecclesia Christi, verum etiam ab ipsis adhuc in carne manentibus Apostolis probari potuerunt. August. De consens. Evangelist. lib. iv. c. 8. tom. iii. P. 2. p. 155.

² Si enim Apostolica integra decurrerunt [decucurrerunt], Lucam autem quod est secundum nos adeo congruit regulæ eorum, ut cum illis apud ecclesias maneat, jam et Lucas constat integrum decucurrisse usque ad sacrilegium Marcionis. Tertull. Adv. Marc. iv. 5. p. 416.

we must, of course, begin with those written by the Apostles,) I reply, my first inquiry is as to the genuineness and uncorrupted preservation of the book. The next as to the character of the author, and the evidence I have for *his* inspiration. Finding him to be one of the Apostles of our Lord, I inquire what evidence I have as to the *divine* mission of our Lord, and having established on internal and external evidence (as before stated) the character of our Lord and his Apostles, I conclude in favour of the inspiration of the book. And this method will answer for all the books of the New Testament, with the exception of the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles.

There are, indeed, as we have already intimated, some books of the New Testament, for the genuineness of which the testimony of the primitive Church was not consentient. Consequently, as far as patristical testimony goes, there is an uncertainty in the case. And hence, I suppose, it is undeniable, that he who firmly believes those books to be part of the canon, must have some better foundation for his belief than patristical testimony, or the voice of the Church. And there is nothing, perhaps, which more strongly shows the inconsistencies to which Romish views on these matters lead, than the fact, that while the Romish Church of the present day maintains the canonicity of the Epistle to the Hebrews as the infallible witness of church-tradition, and tells us, that from church-tradition only can we learn the canon, it is a historical fact, that in the fourth century this infallible witness of church-tradition maintained that it was not canonical.

And here I would ask our opponents, upon what evidence they receive these books. If they say upon patristical tradition, they contradict their own tenet, that catholic consent alone is a sufficient foundation for faith, and pin their faith upon the declarations of that portion of the Catholic Church whose determinations please them. If they admit the insufficiency of patristical tradition in proof of the canonicity of these books, they overturn the position against which we are here contending.

With respect to the three books not written by Apostles, I would remark that for the two former we have the internal testimony (to be judged of by its congruency with the writings of the Apostles already admitted as inspired) which is not, I grant, a sufficient proof after the introduction of Christianity, united with the direct and express testimony of the Fathers, that they were sanctioned and recommended by Apostles, and the unanimous testimony (as far as it is ascertainable) of the early Church in their favour, manifestly grounded on their having received Apostolical sanction. With respect to the third, viz. the Acts of the Apostles, we have the internal testimony (to be judged of as

before) united with the unanimous testimony of the early Church in its favour, grounded manifestly on the supposition of its having received such sanction.

With respect also to those books that are rejected, the question may be at once determined historically. For instance, as to the pretended Epistle of St. Paul to the Laodiceans, the case is clear. There is no sufficient proof of its genuineness. And the writings of those who were not Apostles have, of course, no pretence, apart from very strong and direct evidence in their favour, to a place in the Canon, and therefore need not be considered. And, therefore, when Mr. Newman tells us, "We include the second Epistle of St. Peter, we leave out St. Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians, *simply because* the Church Catholic has done so," (p. 341, 2,) he might as well say that we leave out the Epistles of Ignatius, or the works of Irenæus, or anybody else, "*simply because*" the Fathers have done so. We neither put in nor leave out "*simply because*" the Fathers have done so, for I would beg to ask whether, supposing that they had said, "we grant that Clement's Epistle never received Apostolical sanction, but we reckon it among the inspired books," that would have been a sufficient reason for putting it into the Canon. If not, it is not "*simply because*" the Fathers admitted one and rejected another that we do the same. We look to the grounds of their judgment.

Such, then, is the evidence for the genuineness, uncorrupted preservation, inspiration, and consequent canonicity of the New Testament Scriptures. A brief sketch of its leading features has been all that our limits in this place have allowed us to give. But the more it is expanded into its details, the more complete and convincing will it be found to be. And of this evidence the tradition of the Church is but one part, and in the most important part of the question, namely, the divine origin of the revelation contained in the Scriptures, it is a part of the evidence wholly insufficient by itself to constitute a proof. The utmost which it could do is to certify us of the genuineness and incorrupt preservation of these writings.

Further; were we to admit that the patristical tradition we possess is by itself sufficient to assure us of the genuineness and incorrupt preservation of the writings of the New Testament, (a question which it is unnecessary to enter into, because we have other evidence on the point,) it would by no means follow that it was a sufficient and certain witness of the oral teaching of the Apostles so as to be a divine informant. For it is a totally different thing to hand down certain books as written or sanctioned by the Apostles, and to give a correct report of their oral teaching, whether concerning doctrines or rites. In the case of doc-

trines more especially, it is evident that testimony which might be very sufficient to establish the genuineness of the Scriptures might be very insufficient to establish the genuineness of doctrinal statements professing to come from the oral teaching of the Apostles. I may believe fully the genuineness of a work upon evidence which would be wholly insufficient to establish the certainty of a doctrinal statement reported to me as having been orally delivered by the author of that work. True, our opponents ground their proof of the correctness of the report of it to which they refer on its being delivered by *all* Catholics everywhere, urging that such consent proves its correctness. But then, as we have already observed, the proof of this consent is lamentably deficient, and in fact the claim to it evidently unfounded. There is no such testimony for the Apostolical origin of any doctrine or rite not contained in Scripture, or any interpretation of Scripture, as for the genuineness of the books of the New Testament, I believe I might say, of all, but certainly of all but those books whose genuineness was doubted of by some in the primitive Church, in which case neither party can be assured on the point by the testimony of patristical tradition. And were we even to suppose such consent, its weight in reporting an oral doctrinal statement of the Apostles, however great, would be very different, as we have already intimated, to the weight which it has in bearing witness to a certain book having come from the Apostles. Were we even to allow, then, that in both cases there was consent in the remaining Fathers (which we by no means do) and that the testimony was sufficient in the latter case, it would by no means follow that it was so in the former.

Nay more, the character of the testimony is altogether different. The witness borne to Scripture is direct. It is of this nature. Such and such a book was written by such an Apostle, the book being cited under his name. But in the case of doctrines, interpretations, or practices, it is not in general pretended that the witness appealed to by our opponents is of this direct kind; and if such a pretence be made, facts will immediately disprove its truth. There are few cases in which the Fathers can be shown to have made generally any direct claim to be delivering the oral teaching of the Apostles, and the two in which such claims are made with the most confidence, and by the greatest number, are just those which are generally disallowed, viz., the doctrine of the millenium and the practice of giving the eucharist to infants.

Moreover, in the delivery of a doctrinal statement we have to contend with all the difficulties arising from the carelessness and inaccuracy of the writer, the indistinctness of his conceptions, the bias to which his subject inclined him, difficulties

which any man of experience in such matters will know are quite sufficient to prevent the possibility of any proof of consent even where consent might exist.

And as to matters of fact and the rites and practices of the church, what is there for which we have anything like consentient patristical testimony for its Apostolical origin? We have, no doubt, on many points patristical testimony strongly confirmatory of the correctness of our interpretation of Scripture in matters both of doctrine and practice, but the only testimony which bears a comparison with that for the genuineness of Scripture is a direct ascription of the doctrine or practice to Apostolical teaching.

Now, then, let our opponents no longer envelope themselves in the smoke of fine words and vague generalities, but fairly tell us what doctrine or practice, or what interpretation of Scripture can challenge such direct testimony to its Apostolical origin from the Catholic Fathers as a body, and *point out the passages in which such testimony is to be found*. For instance, let them point out the passages in which it is stated that the Apostles directed that infants should be baptized, and then let them compare with the evidence they find on this point the direct testimonies of the Fathers to the authorship of the books of the New Testament. The evidence will be found to be of an altogether different kind.

It is quite true that the process by which the truth that Scripture is the word of God is arrived at, and the motives inducing men to believe it, may be very different in different individuals. One may begin at one part of the proof and another at another, one may be chiefly influenced by one part and another by another. And generally in the case of those who have been instructed by the Church, the teaching of the Church as to the sacredness of these books is the *introductory* motive to belief in them as the Word of God, so that any subsequent inquiry respecting them is commenced with a feeling of reverent regard towards them. And this feeling *united with a contemplation of the internal testimony* to the divine origin of the revelation they contain, in the excellent nature and effects of that revelation, may, and often will, (always, with the assistance of God's Spirit) produce in the mind a belief in this truth, without any such elaborate investigation of the evidence for it as that to which we have just alluded.

But, in no case, and under no circumstances, can the tradition of the Church be justly taken as *sufficient* proof of a matter which involves a doctrine affecting the very foundation upon which the church stands. Even were tradition a safe guide, as far as concerns conveying to us the oral traditions of the Apostles,

it would not at all follow that it was a safe guide in this point, for the doctrine that Scripture is the Word of God, necessarily depends upon the character of our Lord and his Apostles; and this cannot be proved by any oral declaration of the Apostles to that effect, and still less by any decree of the Church.

But, doubtless, for the genuineness and inspiration of those particular writings which form the New Testament, there can be no sufficient proof to the unassisted mind, without good external evidence; and the external evidence we have for these truths, appears to me, to be, as far as external evidence can go, (for those parts, at least, of the New Testament that have universal tradition in their favour,) conclusive.

And hence, it is the duty of every man who is qualified by education to do so, to inquire into the evidences for the doctrine that Scripture is the word of God; and unless he does this, he cannot possess that evidence of the truth of the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture which is necessary (putting out of sight the work of the Spirit upon the heart) to form so complete a proof of it as to leave no room for reason to cavil or hesitate.

It is quite true that God may so convince the mind of any truth, by a direct operation upon the soul, that such a man would be guilty, and without excuse before him, for not believing it. But in the first place, this can be no evidence to any one but himself. And further, knowing the *discordant* opinions that have been maintained under the *supposition* of such an internal testimony, it is clearly the duty of such an one to see that it is not opposed by other reasonable testimony, and to ascertain, as far as he is able, how far it is supported by other testimony. Granted that he may not be able to see or understand all the evidence there is in its favour, and that if he finds that it is not opposed by other valid evidence, this may be enough for satisfaction in such a case, yet the inquiry it is his duty to make. And this I conceive to be practically the situation of many Christians, who, from circumstances, are prevented from taking that clear and comprehensive view of the evidences for Scripture which could *demonstrate* its divine origin. Here, as far as human assent could go, the ground for belief is lessened; but, in the case which we are now supposing, the work is one of Divine power, and therefore the satisfaction possessed by the mind proportionably strong. Nevertheless, the same reason which makes it incumbent upon such a man to look beyond the internal impressions produced upon his own mind in favour of the truth, either by the intrinsic power of the word or by divine influence, goes to show that the inquiry should be carried as far as the inquirer is able to investigate the subject. It is the duty and the privilege of one who feels that religion is his chief concern, thus to investigate the

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proofs for the divine origin of the Scriptures, and so to strengthen and fortify his faith in what they reveal.

Instead, however, of wishing men to make such inquiries, our opponents urge them against so doing as both unnecessary and dangerous, and that, not on account of the power of the internal evidence of the word or the work of the Spirit, but as if, forsooth, it were an affront to "the Church." Men are to be content to receive all on faith in the dictum of "the church." Their language is, in fact, You must shut your eyes and walk straightforward as your ecclesiastical guide tells you, and then all will be right. Only be sure not to open your eyes and look where you are going, for in that case, we will not answer for the consequences; for we can assure you that some people who have used their eyesight, have made mistakes. And in truth, holding the opinions they do (which we shall notice presently), as to the nature of these evidences, and the state in which men are left, it is no wonder that such is their advice.

But, say our opponents, what are men in general, particularly the illiterate, to do, who are unable to investigate the evidences for this truth? I return the question, and shall probably be told that the illiterate *must* believe upon the testimony of the church. But to the illiterate man, the testimony of the church is merely the testimony of the individual who happens to be his pastor. Will any man say that such testimony is a fit and proper ground for faith? He is not left to such a fragile reed to lean upon. He has a testimony to the truth that Scripture is the word of God infinitely superior to this—I mean in the internal evidence which that Word brings with it of its divine origin in the excellent nature and effects of the revelation contained in it; which, when applied to the heart by the Spirit, is known and felt to be the truth of God. And this testimony of the Holy Spirit to the written Word, given either directly, or indirectly through the revelation contained in it, seals it with an impress not to be mistaken by those to whom it is vouchsafed, and without which, faith in Scripture, as the word of God, is a mere historical faith, altogether unprofitable to any saving purpose.

I hope our opponents are not prepared to deny this, though, alas, of such operations of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals, we hear scarcely anything in their writings; and I will, therefore, take the opportunity to call their attention to another passage from one of their own witnesses, Dr. Jackson. "The Holy Spirit who instructed the first messengers of the Gospel with the true sense and knowledge of the truths therein revealed, and furnished them with diversity of tongues to utter them to the capacity of divers nations, can and *doth*, throughout all succeeding ages, continue his gifts, whether of tongues or others, what-

soever are necessary for *conveying* the true sense and meaning of saving truth already taught, *IMMEDIATELY to the hearts* of all such, in every nation, as are not for their sin judged unworthy of his society; of all such as resist not his motions to follow the lusts of the flesh. And as for men altogether illiterate, that cannot read the Scriptures in any tongue, we do not hold them bound (nor, indeed, are any) to believe absolutely or expressly every clause or sentence in the sacred canon to be the infallible oracle of God's Spirit otherwise than is before expressed; but unto the several matters or substance of truth contained in the principal parts thereof, their souls and spirits are so surely tied and fastened, that they can say to their own consciences, wheresoever these men that teach us these good lessons, learned the same themselves, most certain it is, that originally they came from God; and by the gracious providence of that God, whose goodness they so often mention, are they now come to us. Such are, the rules and testimonies of God's providence, the doctrines or real truths of original sin, of our misery by nature, and freedom by grace; such are, the articles of Christ's passion and the effects thereof, of the resurrection and life everlasting. Many other points there be, not of like necessity or consequence, which unto men specially altogether unlearned, or otherwise of less capacity, may be proposed as the infallible oracles of God; *unto some of which it is not lawful for them to give so absolute and firm irrevocable assent as they must do to the former, because they cannot discern the truth of them in itself, or for itself, or with their own eyes, as, it is supposed, they did the truth of the former.*" (Book ii. Sect. l. c. 2.)

With respect to the nature of that faith by which we believe Scripture to be the word of God, it is said by the Romanists that it ~~must~~ be a divine faith, that is, one that stands on divine testimony; because, in all the articles of religion, faith must have divine testimony to rest upon.

The object in view is to make the testimony of the Church the ground upon which our belief of this truth rests. And they make use of this proposition in two ways; first, to make us the humble servants of "the Church" for a knowledge of this truth; and also to build upon it the argument that the testimony of the Church must be divine, because otherwise we should have no sufficient ground for a belief in this necessary truth.

Now it is quite true that, for all the truths of religion, we need divine testimony as the foundation for faith. But the question whether this or that is a divine testimony, is not, strictly speaking, any part of religion, but rather a previous question. Religion consists in that which is revealed. The revelation itself includes all the doctrines of religion, strictly speaking. And he

who believes the revelation contained in the Scriptures, though he might never see the Scriptures, (the case with not a few in antient, and perhaps some in modern times,) is as much in a state of salvation, as he who enjoys the higher privilege of possessing the Scriptures and faith in their inspiration.

Moreover, if it were absolutely necessary that before we could believe any testimony to be divine, we must have divine testimony that it is so, then there could be no proof to be had of a divine testimony; each one requiring another to prove it, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

We may here remark, however, that even apart from the divine testimony vouchsafed in the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, convincing of this truth, there was *originally* divine testimony to the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. For this doctrine follows from that of the divine mission of our Lord, and the inspiration of his Apostles; and, for that doctrine, we have the testimony of the Father at Christ's baptism, the miracles wrought by our Lord and his Apostles, the testimony of prophecy, and the power and success of the Gospel; all divine testimonies, whether men are disposed to admit them as such, or not. For God bore witness, we are told, to the Apostles, with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost; (Heb. ii. 4.) and confirmed the word with signs following. (Mark xvi. 20.)

It is certainly a matter for consideration with one who is considering the evidences for revelation, whether he has sufficient grounds to admit them to be divine testimonies or not. And this is a question, with which every man has to deal, who is made acquainted in any way with any thing that professes to be a divine testimony. He must seek for some rational grounds of conviction that such testimony is divine; and the motives inducing him to believe that such is the case, ought to be such as approve themselves to the reason of mankind. To judge the evidences upon which the claim of any thing to be a divine testimony rests, is the proper province of reason; while, upon the revelation itself, it is exercised only so far as to ascertain that there is nothing directly contrary to its dictates; and accepts with humility much that may be in its full proportions infinitely above it, transcending the powers of human reason, as much as the Divine nature does the human. The resolution of the question, Upon what grounds do I believe any thing to be a divine testimony, "must be fetched," says Bishop Stillingfleet, "from those *rational evidences* whereby a divine testimony must be distinguished from one merely human and fallible."¹

¹ Orig. S. ii. 8.

It is quite true that this divine testimony comes to us in part only in the report of fallible men, and so far loses a portion of its force. But still there was originally divine testimony to the inspiration of the Scriptures; and the report of that testimony is an important evidence on the point to us. But the only direct divine testimony to the point we now enjoy, is that of the Holy Spirit upon the heart.

The Romanists, however, not satisfied with there having been originally divine testimony to the inspiration of Scripture, maintain that the testimony upon which every man believes this truth, must be divine; when, in fact, apart from the direct witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart, no man now has more than a human report of such testimony.

Upon the whole, then, let us observe what is the state of the case in this matter. The great and important question is, Whether the religion revealed to us in the Scriptures of the New Testament, is from God. And the great evidence in favour of the affirmative, is to be found in the excellent nature and effects of that religion, which may, even to the natural mind, and certainly will to the spiritually enlightened mind, produce a conviction of its divine origin. The sincere inquirer after the truth, therefore, to whom the gift of the Spirit is promised, is not left in this matter to depend upon any human testimony. His faith is grounded upon far better evidence, even the internal power of the Word, sealed in his experience with the witness of the Spirit to its divine origin. And this is, in fact, the very marrow and substance of the question of the inspiration of Scripture; and all other points are in the comparison of but secondary importance.

But this it may be said, affects only those parts of Scripture in which the great truths of Christianity are delivered; and does not even here show more than the divine origin of the truths so delivered; whereas it is of importance to know to what extent we have divine testimony on the subject of religion; and whether the Scriptures, as they stand, proceeded from the pen of inspired authors.

Now I will not venture so to limit the operations of God's Spirit in the hearts of the faithful, as to affirm that such is the case. But thus much I freely admit, that it is the duty of those who are capable of making the inquiry, to ascertain the evidence that exists upon these points.

Here, then, comes in the question of the canon; and we have already shown that for most of the books of the New Testament we have, besides the internal testimony, various testimonies to their Apostolical origin or sanction, among which one is the unanimous witness of the antient records of the church; and for

the other books, similar testimony, except that patristical tradition is not unanimous on the point, and consequently the external testimony not so indubitably in their favour, as for the others.

For the former, the moral evidence that they are the genuine writings of the Apostles, is, we hold, such as to leave no doubt of the fact, in the mind of any impartial person. For the latter the *external* evidence is not equally convincing. The burthen of proof must be thrown more upon the internal evidence; and the guidance of God's Holy Spirit sought to enable us to judge aright. For to assert that any ecclesiastical affirmation at the present day can be a sufficient ground for faith in a matter in which the primitive church was divided, may obtain for a man the credit of being a very bold and confident friend of "the Church" but not that of a very wise or very trust-worthy man.

Such then, we conceive, to be the foundation upon which we have to rest in this question. For the divine origin of the religion delivered to us in the Scriptures, in all its great and important features, every sincere inquirer after the truth has not only the internal witness of its excellence, but also divine testimony. The Holy Spirit works conviction within him, and gives him a knowledge and assurance of the truth. And I see not how, even without further divine assistance, when he couples this testimony with the evident claims of the writers of the Scriptures to divine guidance in their delivery of the truth, he can doubt of the inspiration of those parts of Scripture, at least, in which the great truths of Christianity are delivered. But, besides this, he has, for nearly the whole of the Scriptures, moral evidence, of the most convincing kind, of their having proceeded from inspired authors.

Here, then, is sufficient ground for faith to rest upon. It is at no uncertainties. It has a foundation amply sufficient for its support; and were it not so, it would not be faith.

But, alas! our opponents to induce us, if possible, to embrace their notions on the subject of "tradition," seem willing to leave Christianity itself without any firm foundation to rest upon. They are quite aware of the weakness of the reed upon which they are leaning when using patristical tradition for the purpose to which they apply it. But rather than give it up, they have laboured to show that Christianity itself stands on no better ground, and that the Christian's faith is a mere persuasion, encompassed with doubts and difficulties, such as results from a balance of opposing probabilities!

"The rule of Vincent," says Mr. Newman, "is not of a mathematical or demonstrative character, but moral, and requires practical judgment and good sense to apply it. . . . How many Fathers,

how many places, how many instances constitute a fulfilment of the test proposed? *It is, then, from the nature of the case, a condition which never can be satisfied as fully as it might have been*: it admits of various and unequal application in various instances, and what degree of application is enough must be decided by the same principles which guide us in the conduct of life, which determine us in politics, or trade, or war, *which lead us to accept revelation at all, FOR WHICH WE HAVE BUT A PROBABILITY TO SHOW AT MOST, NAY, TO BELIEVE IN THE EXISTENCE OF AN INTELLIGENT CREATOR.*" (pp. 68—69.) "We, for our part, have been taught to consider that faith in its degree as well as conduct, must be guided by probabilities, and that *doubt is ever our portion in this life.* We can bear to confess that other systems have their unanswerable arguments in matters of detail, and that we are *but striking a balance between difficulties existing on both sides*; that we are following as the voice of God, what **ON THE WHOLE** we have reason to think such." (p. 129.) And, therefore, the Romanists, who justly think that doubt is incompatible with faith,¹ and have, therefore, very unnecessarily and unwarrantably invented the doctrine of infallibility to remove it, are told that they have troubled themselves very unnecessarily about the matter. (p. 103.) And we are told that "according to English principles, faith has all it needs in knowing that God is our Creator and Preserver, and that he **MAY IF IT SO HAPPEN**, have spoken." . . . "If we are asked how *faith* differs from *opinion*, we reply in its considering his being, governance, and will, as a matter of *personal* interest and importance to us, *not in the degree of light or darkness under which it perceives these truths.*" . . . "Nay, *doubt may even be said to be implied in a Christian's faith.*" . . . To require such definite and clear notices of truth, is to hanker after the Jewish law, a system of *less mysterious* information, as well as less **GENEROUS faith.**" And he says, that "Scripture is full of instances in point." And what does the reader suppose is the instance he gives? That of our Saviour himself, who, he tells us, "scarcely once declared to inquirers that he was the Christ," but "left them to gather the great truth for themselves how they could, **WITH WHATEVER DEGREE OF CERTAINTY,**" &c., implying that no evidence was given *sufficient* to exclude doubt. (See the whole of pp. 103—5.) And a writer in the principal organ of our opponents, the British Critic, replying to the objection that the evidence for tradition is insufficient to produce assurance of its truth, meets the objection on the ground that there is not (as he would have us be-

¹ See Placette's *Incurable Scepticism of the Church of Rome*, c. 1.

lieve) indubitable evidence for Scripture. (Brit. Crit. for April, p. 467.) And this remark is made apparently on the ground that there are those who object to the sufficiency of that evidence, just as they tell us that Scripture must be obscure, because some people misinterpret it.

And thus the Author of the 85th Tract says, "How do we know that the whole Bible is the word of God? Happily, at present, we are content to believe this, because we have been *so taught*. It is our great blessedness to receive it *on faith* .

. . . It does seem to me preposterous to confess that free inquiry leads to scepticism, [who confesses this?] and scepticism makes one less happy than faith; and yet that such free inquiry is right. *What is right, and what is happy, cannot, on the long run, and on a large scale, be disjoined*. To follow truth can never be a subject of regret; *free inquiry does lead a man to regret the days of his child-like faith*, [which shows who it is that thinks free inquiry does lead to scepticism, and therefore wisely advises us to shut our eyes] therefore, it is not following truth." (pp. 72, 3.) And after having depreciated, as far as possible, the testimony we have for the canon of Scripture, in order to make it appear not more than what we have for any of his favourite doctrines, (pp. 75, &cs.) and collected together "startling" passages of Scripture as a set-off to anything startling we may find in his traditional doctrines; (pp. 86 &cs.) and, at last, concluded that "the canon of Scripture rests on no other foundation than [what he calls] the catholic doctrines," and that "*in both cases we believe mainly because the church of THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES unanimously believed* ; (p. 102.) feeling, of course, the utter weakness of the foundation to which he has reduced both, boldly tells us that in the intercourse between our Lord and the Pharisees, the latter "*were bid to believe on weak arguments and fanciful deductions* ; (p. 111.) and having thus paved the way for his conclusion, sums up all with the following observations,—“ In connexion with what has been said, observe the singular coincidence, or rather appositeness, of what Scripture enjoins, as to going by *faith* in religious matters. *The difficulties which exist in the evidence, give a deep meaning to the exhortation*. Scripture is quite aware of the difficulties. Objections can be brought against its own inspiration, its canonicity; against revealed doctrines, as in the case of the Jews; against the Messiahship of Jesus Christ. It knows them all; it has provided against them by recognizing them. It says 'Believe,' because it knows that unless we believe there is no means of divine knowledge. If we will doubt, that is, if we will not allow evidence to be sufficient which *merely results in a balance on the side of revelation*; if we will determine that no

evidence is enough to prove revealed doctrine but what is overpowering ; if we will not go by evidence in which THERE ARE (SO TO SAY) THREE CHANCES FOR REVELATION, AND ONLY TWO AGAINST, we cannot be Christians, we shall miss Christ, either in his inspired Scriptures, or in his doctrines, or in his ordinances." " *Love is the parent of faith. We believe in things we see not from love of them. . . . Faith is reliance on the word of another ; the word of another is, in itself, a faint evidence compared with that of sight or reason. It is influential only when we cannot do without it.* Why should not the church be divine ? The burden of proof surely is on the other side. I will accept her doctrines, and her rites, and her Bible—not one, and not the other, but all—till I have clear proof that she is mistaken. *It is, I FEEL, God's will that I should do so ; and besides I love these her possessions—I love her Bible, her doctrines, and her rites, and THEREFORE I BELIEVE.*" (pg. 112—15.

If this is not the *ne plus ultra* of enthusiasm, where can we find it ? And why, I would ask, may not the Pagan or Mohammedan be allowed the same answer ? I am a Pagan, because I *love* the doctrines and rites of Paganism. I am a Mohammedan because I *love* the doctrines and rites of Mohammed. The answer is just as reasonable in their mouths, as in that of the Christian. That there is no influential saving belief in the doctrines of the Gospel, without some love of them, and therefore that we need the love of God to be shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, is indeed most true ; and thankful should we have been to have seen a recognition of this truth ; but for a man to make faith depend upon a mere feeling of love, and seriously to maintain that if we came to investigate the evidence for our religion, and weigh the arguments *pro* and *con*, we should find that there was *a mere balance in its favour, in the proportion of three for, and two against ;* and that, too, where all the "love" and prepossessions of the writer are professedly engaged on the side of the scale which he tells us *does but just preponderate*, is indeed a fearful specimen of recklessness in the support of a hypothesis. As if rather than not maintain it, he would endanger the cause of Christianity itself.

Thus, in their wild zeal for tradition, they are sapping the very foundations of Christianity. The doctrine which they have here advanced, is precisely that which is calculated to drive men either into Romanism, in order to find something which at least professes to relieve men from doubt and uncertainty, or into infidelity.

No wonder that any one should discourage men from looking into the evidences for religion and the inspiration of the Bible,

who thinks that there is no better evidence than a small balance of probabilities for them.

As to Mr. Newman's remark in the first of the passages quoted above, that there is but probability for the existence of an Intelligent Creator, there are many Deists who would not have made it.

And to give weight to these views, he has ventured even to quote Bishop Butler as giving his sanction to them. For after the first of the passages given above, where he speaks of having "*probability at most* to show for revelation, he adds, "This character, indeed, of Vincent's canon, will but RECOMMEND it to the disciples of the school of Butler, from its agreement with the analogy of nature." So that the fact here supposed that the evidence for revelation is doubtful, is actually a *recommendation* to our belief of it, if we agree with Bishop Butler. From which it of course follows, that the more doubtful the evidence for such a matter, the better claim it has upon our belief. And this *monstrum horrendum* fathered upon that acute reasoner, Bishop Butler. And on what ground? Because Bishop Butler has in his "Analogy" taken upon him to show the infidel that, *even* if the evidence for Christianity were not such as to afford him a proof that he could consider beyond exception certain, still it amounts to such a degree of probability, that he is doing unwisely in such a matter not to *act* according to its dictates; just as in many other matters he would himself reckon it unreasonable not to act upon evidence, which, nevertheless, he did not feel to be free from the possibility of cavil. Bishop Butler not only gives no countenance to the notion that he sympathized in the feeling that the evidence for Christianity was open to any just cavil or reasonable difficulty, but clearly shows that he had no such notion. For while he invariably puts such views only into the mouths of his opponents, as, for instance, "*Persons who speak of the evidence of religion as doubtful, and of this supposed doubtfulness as a positive argument against it, should be put upon considering,*" &c. (Pt. 2. c. 6.); and again, "*If, upon consideration of religion, the evidence of it should seem to any persons doubtful, in the highest supposable degree, even this doubtful evidence will, however, put them into a general state of probation*" (Ib.), he speaks so clearly as to show that he regarded the evidence for Christianity in a very different light. "Though," he says, "this proof [i. e. miracles] is *real* and *conclusive*, yet it is liable to objections, and may be run up into difficulties; which, however, persons who are capable not only of talking of, but of really seeing, are capable of *seeing through*, that is, not of clearing up and answering them so as to satisfy their curiosity; for of such knowledge we are not capable with

respect to any one thing in nature ; but capable of seeing that *the proof* is not lost in these difficulties, or destroyed by these objections." (Ib.) Again, speaking of the evidence for Christianity from prophecy, he reminds his opponents that "those persons who have thoroughly examined it, and some of them were men of the coolest tempers, greatest capacities, and least liable to imputations of prejudice, insist upon it as *determinately conclusive*." (Pt. 2. c. 7.) "The truth of our religion, like the truth of common matters, is to be judged of by all the evidence taken together. And unless the whole series of things which may be alleged in this argument, and every particular in it, can reasonably be supposed to have been by accident, (for here the stress of the argument for Christianity lies,) then is the truth of it *proved*." (Ib.)

It is difficult to conceive how Bishop Butler's meaning could be so misapprehended as it has been by Mr. Newman. And one cannot but regret, for the honour of our church, that such statements as we are now commenting on, should ever have seen the light, from the quarter from which they come.

If Mr. Newman had confined himself to the observation, that, Bishop Butler had shown that it was reasonable to act sometimes upon evidence which though open to some cavils, rendered any thing probable, and that consequently patristical tradition was not to be despised because it was open to some cavils, that would have been more like a *fair* application of the bishop's *mode of reasoning*. But even then the argument would not have been tenable. For the things which Bishop Butler is speaking of are the highest verities of religion. Now it might be very true that, as it respects the great doctrines of Christianity, doubtful evidence might be a sufficient inducement to reasonable men to *act* as persons convinced of their truth, and yet it would not follow that the same evidence should be considered sufficient for other matters. He who had once seen the tide return after ebbing, would infer the *possibility* of its returning again, and upon that inference might reasonably act as if it *certainly* would do so, because his life was at stake ; but if the utmost which the return of the tide could do would be immaterial to him, then there would be no absurdity in his waiting for further evidence.

Moreover, the two cases are altogether different. In the one case a religion is offered us, which it is alleged is the only guide to happiness in another world, and the belief of which, even if it should turn out not to be true, can do us no harm, but, on the contrary, will promote our real happiness here. We may reasonably act, therefore, as if it were true, even on doubtful evidence. But, in the other case, statements are brought to us, claiming to be reports of the oral teaching of the Apostles, which, while

they do not pretend to be of vital importance, may be but corruptions of Christianity, and therefore be more or less injurious to us.

The argument of Bishop Butler, indeed, if thus strained to matters to which it was never intended to apply, loses all its force. For it might be applied to any thing we meet with in one or two of the Fathers. Such things (it might be said) being thus mentioned, there is a degree of probability that they had an Apostolical origin, and therefore, as Bishop Butler tells us that in religious matters a degree of probability is a sufficient ground for us to act upon, we are bound to act as if these statements were certainly Apostolical. But who sees not, that such an application of his argument would be absurd?

Mr. Newman is fond of appealing to Bishop Stillingfleet, as one who held his views. Let me call his attention, then, to the following extract from that able and truly Protestant Prelate's writings.

"Those evidences," says the bishop, "whereby a divine testimony may be known, must be such as may not leave men's minds *in suspense*, but are of their own nature *convincing proofs* of it . . . I know it is a great dispute among many, whether those things which are usually called the common motives of faith, do of their own nature only induce a probable persuasion of the truth of the doctrine as probable which they are joined with, or else are they sufficient for the producing a firm assent to the doctrine as true? I grant they are not demonstrative so as to enforce assent, for we see the contrary by the experience of all ages; but that they are not sufficient foundation for an unprejudiced mind to establish a firm assent upon, is a thing not easy to be granted; chiefly upon this account, that an obligation to believe doth lie upon every one to whom these evidences of a divine testimony are sufficiently discovered . . . If, therefore, there be no evidences given sufficient to carry the minds of men beyond mere probability, what sin can it be in those to disbelieve, who cannot be obliged to believe as true what is only discovered as probable. I cannot, therefore, see how an obligation to believe a divine testimony is consistent with their opinion who make the *utmost* which any outward evidences can extend to, to be only the *bare credibility* of the doctrine attested by them. *I can very well satisfy myself with the ground and reason why the more subtle wits of the Church of Rome do assert this; for if nothing else can be produced by all motives of faith but only a probable persuasion of the truth of Christian doctrine, then here comes in the fairest pretence for the infallibility of their church; for otherwise they tell us we can have no foundation for a divine faith; for*

how can that be a foundation for divine faith which can reach no higher than a moral inducement, and beget only a probable persuasion of the credibility of the doctrine of Christ? But on what account those who disown the infallibility of the Church of Rome in the proposal of matters of faith, should yet consent with those of it in an hypothesis taken up in probability, merely out of subserviency to that most advantageous piece of the mystery of iniquity, is not easy to resolve. Unless the over-fondness of some upon the doctrine of the Schools more than of the Gospel, hath been the occasion of it. For how agreeable can that opinion be to the Gospel, which so evidently puts the most defensive weapons into the hands of unbelief? For, doubtless, in the judgment of any rational person a mere probable persuasion of the credibility of the doctrine of Christ, where an assent to it as true is required, can never be looked on as an act of faith; for if my assent to the truth of the thing be according to the strength of the arguments inducing me to believe, and these arguments do only prove a probability of divine testimony, my assent can be no stronger than to a thing merely probable; which is, that it may be or not be true, which is not properly assent, but a suspending our judgments till some *convincing* argument be produced on either side I cannot conceive that men, otherwise learned and sober, should with so much confidence assert, that the rational evidences of a divine testimony are insufficient to prove a doctrine true, unless it be from hence, that they find that, notwithstanding the strongest evidences, many persons continue in unbelief. For, say they, 'if these arguments were scientific and demonstrative (as they speak) of the truth of the doctrine attested by them, then all persons to whom they are propounded must certainly believe.' But this is very easily answered; for we speak not of internal but outward evidence; not of that in the subject but of the object, or more fully of the reason of the thing, and not the event in us; for, doubtless there may be undoubted truth and evidence in many things which some persons either cannot or will not understand. If Epicurus should contend still that the sun and stars are no bigger than they seem to be, will it hence follow that there can be no rational demonstration of the contrary? Nay, if the way of demonstration be offered him, and telescopes put into his hands, yet if he be resolved to maintain his credit, and therefore, his opinion, and will not use the telescopes, or suspect still they are intended only to deceive his sight, what possible way will there be of convincing such a person, though the thing be in itself demonstrable? Now, if the strength of prejudice, or maintaining of credit, can prevail so much in matters of mathematical evidence, to withhold assent,

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what power may we think a corrupt interest may have upon the understanding, as to the arguments which tend to prove the truth of that doctrine which is so repugnant to that carnal interest which the heart is already devoted to! Our blessed Saviour hath himself given us so full an account of the original and causes of unbelief in the persons he conversed with, that that may yield us a sufficient answer to this objection. He tells us, the ground of it was not want of light, nay, *there was light sufficient to convince any*, but that those to whom the light came loved darkness rather than it, because their deeds were evil. John iii. 19. . . . [And he proceeds to refer to John v. 44., Matt. vii. 14., John v. 40.] When the most convincing miracles were used, they would rather attribute them to the Prince of devils than to the power of God. (Matt. xi. 24.) And though our Saviour presently, by rational and demonstrative arguments, did prove the contrary to their faces, yet we see thereby it was a resolution not to be convinced, or yield to the truth, which was the cause why they did not believe It would be no difficult task to discover in all those instances wherein the unbelief of men is discovered in the New Testament, that the persons guilty of it did not proceed like rational men, or such as desired truth, but were wholly carried away through passion, interest, prejudice, disaffection, or some other cause of that nature, which may give us a sufficient account why those persons did not believe although there might be *clear* and *undoubted* evidence to persuade them to it. But although I assert that these rational evidences are sufficient arguments of the truth of the doctrine they come to manifest, yet I would not be so understood that I thereby resolve all religion into a mere act of reason and knowledge, and that no more power is required in the understanding to believe the Gospel than to believe a mathematical demonstration; which is another objection some lay in the way of this opinion, but it is not difficult getting over it. For the sufficiency which I attribute to rational evidence is not absolute and simple, but *in suo genere* as an objective evidence."¹

Such is the language of Bishop Stillingfleet on this matter, and we see from it that this doctrine of Mr. Newman appeared to him to be one which admitted the fairest pretence for introducing the Infallibility of the Church of Rome.

But, in truth, our opponents seem to think that where there is indubitable evidence for anything there cannot be faith; that, in a word, faith is some indescribable act of the mind by which its assent is given upon evidence not sufficient to exclude doubt, and that there must be some degree of doubtfulness in the evi-

¹ Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae*. Bk. iii. ch. 8. at the end.

dence to make it faith. For Mr. Keble tells us that "evidence complete in all its parts leaves no room for faith." (p. 82.) And again, "Perhaps had the evidence for it [i. e. the Nicene tradition] been more overpowering, no room would have been left for the requisite trial of our faith." (p. 148.) So that if a few persons were to tell us that there is such a place as Rome, we might believe that there was, and that would be faith, but if the evidence was so strong in favour of there being such a place that it was in reason *indubitable* that there was, then there would be no room for faith. May I ask what there would be room for?

I know not what faith can be but an assent of the mind upon that rational evidence which excludes doubt. For it is surely impossible to believe a thing, and yet be doubtful about it at the same time. It may be difficult, and perhaps impossible, to decide the precise amount of moral evidence calculated to bring conviction to the mind of an individual, but surely to maintain that a man may believe, nay is bound to believe, a thing upon evidence which you allow not to be indubitable, is beyond measure strange. "Doth the strength of the argument," says Bishop Stillingsfleet, when meeting a precisely similar statement from one of his Romish adversaries, "hinder me at all from believing what I did not see? I had rather thought, the more obscure the object had been, the greater necessity there had been of strong evidence to persuade a man to believe . . . *the greatest clearness and evidence as to the testimony is not repugnant to the nature of faith.*"—"We think it our duty to believe firmly whatever God saith, but withal we think it our duty to inquire carefully whether God hath said it or no before we believe; and according to the evidence we have of this we assent to the former."¹

I will add only (as there is no authority with our opponents like the Fathers) a passage from the excellent Hilary. Speaking of St. Paul using the words "according to the Scriptures," when adverting to the death and resurrection of Christ, (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4,) he says that he did it to give *security* for the doctrine to enable us to resist objections, when Christ Jesus was understood so to die and rise again as was *written*. "*For faith knows no danger, (or, uncertainty); and every Christian confession is safe in the hidden mystery of God.*"²

¹ See Discourse in Vindication of Protestant Grounds of Faith, pp. 387—390.

² *Pia adversus calumniam resistendi securitate proposita, cum ita mori ac resurgere Christus Jesus intelligendus esset, qualiter scriptus est. Non enim habet fides periculum: et omnis pia professio in occulto sacramento Dei tuta est.* HIL. De Trin. lib. x. § 67. col. 1078.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT HOLY SCRIPTURE IS OUR SOLE DIVINELY-REVEALED RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE, AND SOLE INFALLIBLE JUDGE OF CONTROVERSIES IN RELIGION, AND IS CONSEQUENTLY IN THE CREDENDA OF RELIGION THE SOLE AUTHORITY WHICH BINDS THE CONSCIENCE TO BELIEF IN WHAT IT DELIVERS.

IT will be readily granted, I suppose, that in religion, with the exception of those truths which (as the Apostle intimates, Rom. i.) reason, judging from the works of creation, may teach us, nothing but a divine testimony can be sufficient to bind the conscience to the belief of any doctrine. The divine will may, indeed, be made known to us in various ways, and through the agency of man, but all will agree I conceive in this, that whatever is delivered by man on the subject of religion can have power over the conscience only so far as it can be shown to have come originally from God.

For faith, as it respects the truths of religion, must have for its foundation a divine testimony. "Faith," says the Apostle, "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. i. 17.) And this Bellarmine himself acknowledges, that "faith must have the word of God to rest upon," so that where there is no divine testimony "there will be no faith."¹

The ground, therefore, upon which our faith must rest, as it concerns the truths of religion, must be some real or supposed word of God. In our inquiries, therefore, as to "what is truth" in religion, we have to inquire, "what hath God said." Our knowledge on the subject must begin and terminate with that which we have reason to consider divine revelation. Faith, theologically considered, expresses an assent of the mind to a truth

¹ Cum *fides nitatur verbo Dei*, nisi habeamus verbum Dei non scriptum nulla nobis erit *fides*. De Verb. Dei, lib. iv. c. 4. I am not here concerned with his reasoning in this passage, or the application he makes of the principle.

on the ground of its having been revealed to us by God.¹ It is belief in things not the objects of the senses built upon that which is believed to be divine testimony, and our evidence that such testimony is divine, must be satisfactory to the mind, otherwise our assent must be proportionably uncertain.

Hence, as we have already observed, the divinely-revealed rule of faith is our *sole* rule of faith.

In determining, therefore, what constitutes our *rule of faith*, the great question is, Through what media may we obtain information as to what God has revealed to man on the subject of religion, sufficiently certain to bind the conscience to belief?

For the answer to this question, it is evident that we cannot be guided by human authority. The Brahmin will send us to one set of sacred books, the Mohammedan to another. And the credentials of any person or writing, professing to deliver to us a divine revelation, must be judged by us upon our individual responsibility to God, and not taken for granted upon any *human* testimony; and for this simple reason, that we are each of us responsible to God for our conduct, and cannot shift that responsibility upon others. All, therefore, are obliged to allow the right and *duty* of private judgment upon this point to a certain extent. Even the Romanist himself, who begins with the doctrine of the infallibility of his Church, begs you to examine the credentials of its infallibility, and thereby grants, in that point at least, the right and duty of private judgment.

Mr. Newman himself, therefore, says, "If man is in a state of trial, and his trial lies in the general exercise of the will, and the choice of religion is an exercise of will, and always implies an act of individual judgment, it follows that such acts are in the number of those by which he is tried, and for which he is to give an account hereafter. So far all parties must be agreed, that without private judgment, there is no responsibility." (p. 155.) To which he adds, "Romanist, I consider, agrees with Protestant so far; the question in dispute being, what are the *means* which are to direct our choice, and what is the due *manner* of using them," against which Mr. Newman must allow me to caution the reader, for the question is, what is the degree of value attaching to the various *means* we have to direct our choice, and whether, of those means, Scripture is not our alone divine and infallible informant; and when he proceeds to tell us that popular Protestantism would *deprive* us of all external means but Scripture, because it will not give them that place which he

¹ So Durandus (as quoted by Bishop Pearson in his exposition of the Creed, Art. 1) says,—*Fides est habitus quo assentimur dictis Scripture propter auctoritatem Dei revelantis.* Durand. lib. iii. Dist. 24. q. 1. § 9.

assigns to them, he is making a statement which, with impartial readers, can only be injurious to himself and his own cause. He knows well that, to mention no others, one mean, used very diligently by "popular Protestantism," is the preaching of fallible men, whom it believes to be often used by God as the instruments for conveying saving truth to the heart, both in the choice of a religion, and after that choice is made, in the further choice between truth and error, inculcated by the various teachers of that religion; a choice, however, which we contend must be grounded upon that which has reasonable proof of its being the word of God.

Now we have already considered the grounds upon which Holy Scripture demands our faith in it as the word of God. The question, then, is, have we any other divine informant? Our opponents put in a claim for what they call the tradition of the church, or catholic consent, *i. e.*, the tradition delivered to us by certain early writers of the church, and they tell us that Scripture and this tradition form jointly the rule of faith, sending us for that tradition to the writings of the first few centuries.

The reply is, that this tradition (as we have already endeavoured to prove in a former chapter) is, from its nature, utterly unfit to be reckoned a divine informant, and, therefore, can form no part of the rule of faith. Prove it to be a divine informant, and we at once admit it into the rule of faith; but if it be anything less than a divine informant, it can form no part of that rule. Mr. Keble may rest assured that we not only "*cannot*," but do not *wish* to "hide it from ourselves, that God's unwritten word, *if it can* be any how authenticated, must necessarily demand the same reverence from us [*i. e.* as his written word]; and for exactly the same reason, *because it is his word*." (p. 26.) And to suppose that this is denied, is to flight with a shadow of his own creation, instead of meeting the real antagonist.

The "rule of faith," therefore, might be thus defined, that it consists, besides the Old Testament, of all which we have reasonable ground of assurance was delivered to the church by our Lord and his Apostles, or with their sanction and authority. To those who heard them, and perhaps to some others, *all* which they delivered, as from God, came with equal authority, and formed, as a whole, the rule of faith. And if oral tradition had been considered a safe conveyance for the truth, it would have been left to be so handed down to us. But such is not the case; and the very fact that the Apostles were careful to commit the doctrines of the Gospel to writing, shows that they considered them unsafe but in writing. And hence the Holy Scriptures are *to us* the sole rule of faith, because they embrace all which we have reasonable ground of assurance was delivered to the church

by our Lord and his Apostles, or with their sanction and authority.

We receive the Apostolic traditions given to us in the Scriptures, because we have sufficient reason to consider them genuine; we receive not, as binding, statements pretended to be derived, through the tradition of the Fathers, from their oral teaching, because their genuineness is altogether incapable of proof. We do not reject them because we have any doubt as to the good faith of the Fathers, but because we know that, in matters of doctrine, men are exceedingly liable to error in their representation of the opinions of others; and also from the utter insufficiency and uncertainty of the documents remaining to us of the antient church, to establish anything like catholic consent; and we may add, the insufficiency and uncertainty of the evidence afforded by even those that do remain, comparatively to what they ought to afford on the hypothesis of our opponents; though at the same time we do not (as our opponents misrepresent us) regard what the Fathers have delivered to us respecting the faith as useless: but, on the contrary, that, properly used, it may be of considerable value.

But, by "the rule of faith," we understand a testimony which shows us *infallibly* those doctrines which we are *bound by our duty to God* to receive; and one which has such evidences of its divine origin, as make it binding upon the consciences of all men; and of that rule, therefore, nothing can form a part which has not reasonable evidence of its being the word of God.

And if Holy Scripture is thus the sole infallible and authoritative rule of faith, it follows, of course, that it is to its decision alone that we must appeal, as of absolute authority and infallible in controversies concerning the faith; and hence it is justly called the sole infallible *judge of controversies of faith*.

We say, also, that Holy Scripture is the sole infallible rule of faith *to every individual*; because, upon the very same grounds upon which our opponents admit the right and duty of private judgment in determining between the various forms of religion existing in the world, do we contend for the right and duty of private judgment in determining between the various meanings ascribed by nominal Christians to the word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures. "Without private judgment," says Mr. Newman, "there is no responsibility;" and to what individual or community among Christians, I would ask, can my responsibility to God as an individual, with what all grant to be his word in my hands, be transferred? Is there anything besides Scripture that has power over the consciences of individuals?

Nor does the case of an altogether illiterate person overthrow the truth of this as a general rule; which our opponents may

perhaps see, by asking themselves what they would do in the case of an illiterate Mohammedan? Would they say, You must give up your religion and receive ours, because we are certainly right; but we cannot allow you, as a very illiterate man, to exercise your judgment upon the matter? He might at once reply, I have been told by those who, for aught I know, may be as good judges as you, that *my* religion is right; and, therefore, notwithstanding my disadvantages, I must make the best use I can of my private judgment, and *pray to God to direct me aright*; for as there is so much difference of opinion upon this matter, I cannot follow one guide blindfold any more than the other. And this holds equally for a choice between the different meanings given to Scripture, as for a choice between the different religions existing in the world.

And this admission of the right of private judgment, be it observed, does not prevent any Church from excommunicating one who, in the view of that Church, errs obstinately in the fundamentals of the faith. They who excommunicate, and he who adheres to his error, both act on *their own responsibility*, neither pretending to infallibility, either through the possession of patriarchal tradition, or in any other way; but appealing primarily to the Scriptures, and through them to the great Head of the Church, as the Judge; an appeal which can only be decided at a future day. And when the Church becomes split into various parties of different sentiments, it *must* be left to the judgment of every individual to determine, *as well as he can*, as to their tenets and rival pretensions; a judgment which must be grounded upon the word of God in the Scriptures, as the only *divine* informant; though in forming it, he may derive much help from the records of the Christian Church during the whole of its past course, particularly in the earlier period of it; while he takes care to remember the uncertainties and imperfections attending all informants but Scripture.

"If," says Dean Sherlock, "you ask whose judgment ought to take place, the judgment of the Church, or of every private Christian? I answer, The judgment of the Church of necessity must take place as to external government, to determine what shall be professed and practised in her communion; and no private Christian has any thing to do in these matters. But when the question is, What is right or wrong, true or false, in what we may obey, and in what not, here *every private Christian* who will not believe without understanding, nor follow his guides blindfold, *must judge for himself*; and it is as much as his soul is worth to judge right."

¹ Discourse concerning a Judge of Controversies, pp. 11, 12.

We do not, then, be it observed, rest this truth upon any supposed *necessity* that God *must* have communicated his will to mankind, through the medium of writing; or that the Scriptures must, of necessity, contain this or that. Such reasoning appears presumptuous and unfounded. We take things as we find them, and reason accordingly. It is not for us to determine what it was necessary for God to do, or what he might do, and suppose it done, but to use the reason which God has given us, in ascertaining what he has done; and we thus find that there is reasonable evidence that Scripture is his Word; and that there is no sufficient evidence for anything else being such.

If, then, the arguments given in the chapter on patristical tradition are a sufficient proof that such tradition cannot be considered an unwritten Word of God, and is thus not a sufficient foundation for faith to rest upon, the truth which we here advocate is by that admission (as far as our present subject is concerned) established.

And it follows from hence,

First, That the doctrines contained in Scripture, have an authoritative claim upon our faith, only *as far as they are there revealed*; and

Secondly, That no doctrine has any authoritative claim upon our faith, that is not revealed in Scripture.

These two corollaries we shall notice more particularly in our next chapter.

And in the same way it follows that Scripture, being our sole divine informant, is also our *sole divinely-revealed rule of practice*.

But the truth, for which we here contend, does not rest on the arguments we have already adduced, as its sole foundation; and we shall now proceed to offer to the reader some further considerations respecting it.

I. On its true nature and extent.

II. The additional arguments by which it may be supported, with a reply to the objections by which it is assailed.

We shall first argue the question as to Scripture being the sole *divine rule of faith and practice*, and then show that is in like manner the sole infallible *judge of controversies in religion*. Our remarks will more particularly refer to matters of faith, except where stated; these points forming the most important part of the inquiry.

I. First, then, as to the true nature and extent of this truth, that Scripture is the sole divine rule of faith and practice.

We premise some remarks on this head, in order to guard

against these misconceptions, and, I may add, misrepresentations of our views, which are so frequently to be met with.

Let it be observed, then, first, that it is not affirmed by us that we have, in the Holy Scriptures, everything that our Lord and his Apostles uttered; nor that what the Apostles delivered in writing, was of greater authority than what they delivered orally. It is undeniable that we have not *all* that they delivered. St. Paul, in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, appears to allude to information which he had given them orally, and which he does not state in his writings. (2 Thess. ii. 5, 6.) It is likely that this might have been the case in some minor points. Nay, it is *possible* that the Apostles may have given to some of their converts, on some occasion, a more full and luminous exposition of this or that doctrine, than what we find in Scripture. I will even add that it is *possible* that as there had been a succession of God's people from the beginning, so the substance, or at least a portion of such additional matter may have been propagated from one to another, and have thus come to the children of God of our own day, commended to the spiritual mind by its own light; but, as far as regards any direct proof, or external evidence of its Apostolical origin, utterly destitute of any such claim upon us, and I should rather with Theodoret,¹ attribute any similarity of sentiment that has prevailed among the children of God on such points, to their having all been partakers of the influences of the same Spirit.

But this we do affirm, that having *four* different accounts of "the Gospel of Jesus Christ," the last written for the very purpose of making the account complete,² and *above twenty* Epistles written by the Apostles to explain it still further, to say that anything at all important is omitted, is a foul libel upon that Holy Spirit by which the Apostles were guided. We want no Fathers to tell us this; notwithstanding that Mr. Newman cannot even believe that Scripture *notices* even the *fundamentals* of the faith, but on the authority of the Fathers.³

And we add, that as there is nothing else entitled to be considered a divine informant, so there is nothing else that has authority to bind the conscience to a belief of what it delivers.

Holy Scripture, therefore, is to us the *perfect* or *complete* rule of faith.

We speak not of any abstract perfection, such that nothing could be added to it that would throw additional light upon the doctrines of religion; for indeed it would not become us to at-

¹ See extracts from Theodoret, ch. 10. below.

² See Euseb. Hist. Eccl. iil. 24.

³ Lect. pp. 339, 40.

tempt to pass any such judgment upon any revelation it might please God to afford us. But it is perfect in the sense of entireness. And of this sort of perfection only are we qualified to judge.

In determining, therefore, whether Scripture is such a rule, we are not at all concerned with the inquiry whether this or that doctrine is contained there, nor even whether the truths there delivered are revealed plainly or obscurely; for neither of these affect the solution of the question, which depends upon this, viz., whether Scripture is or is not our only divine informant. The perfection of the rule *to us*, follows from the fact that there is *no other*, nothing else that is entitled to the character of a divine and infallible rule; and by this, therefore, *whatever it may be*, we *must* be guided. We say not, that it embraces everything which God might have revealed, nor even all which the Apostles did actually deliver, but that it includes all which we can know to be of divine revelation.

Nor let our opponents object that it cannot be supposed that any, the least portion of what the Apostles delivered, could be allowed to perish from the remembrance of the Church; for the reply is obvious, and one that is not at all flattering to their favourite hypothesis of the fidelity of church-tradition; namely, that such things have unquestionably perished. For instance, where is the church-tradition from which we can learn what it was that withheld the appearance of "the wicked one?" (2 Thess. ii. 5, 6.) Where is the tradition which delivers to us those things to which St. John alludes at the end of his Gospel?

And this remark is a complete answer to the objection often made by the Romanists to Protestant views, namely, that we have a different rule of faith to the earliest Christians, because theirs included more than what is delivered in the Scriptures; for this is equally true of the Popish Rule, the Romanists themselves not pretending to know some things which we are assured from Scripture were delivered by the Apostles to their converts. We do not deny, then, that there may be some particles of the gold of the sanctuary in the records of Christian antiquity. And we subject those records to the test of Scripture, reason, and conscience, that we may, if possible, extract them. And we look to the aid of the Divine Spirit to help us in our inquiries. While certainly it is our belief that such a process would show that the gold bears very, very little proportion to the dross; and that to the great majority, such a search would be as unprofitable as laborious. There is danger, indeed, in the search to all; for the same feelings and prejudices which originally caused the dross to accumulate, are still alive to operate in its favour, and make men often prefer it to the pure gold.

Here, then, is the great difference between us and our opponents, that we allow men to judge of that which comes to them by what is called church-tradition, by the light of Scripture, reason, and conscience, and do not allow it to assume the character of an unwritten Word of God, and so to bind the conscience to belief in whatever it may deliver. Our opponents will not allow us to judge of it, but only to be judged by it, and submit to it as a divine testimony.

Secondly, it is not affirmed that those doctrines only are to be received that are laid down in *express* terms in Scripture, but that those are to be received that are *either* delivered there in *express* terms, or deducible by *necessary consequence* apparent to reason for its statements.

For instance, it is nowhere stated in *express* terms in Scripture that the Holy Spirit is God, but the doctrine of his divinity follows by necessary consequence apparent to reason from the statements of Scripture. The same may be said of the doctrine of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father.

Thirdly, the grievous misrepresentations of Romanists and Oxford Tract writers compel us to add what might otherwise have been thought to be unnecessary, viz. that when we speak of Scripture as the sole authoritative rule of faith to every individual, we are as far as themselves from "seeming to allow," or being "in the way to allow" "that that is truth to each which each thinks to be truth, provided he sincerely and really thinks it, that the divinity of the Bible itself is the only thing that needs to be believed, and that its meaning varies with the individuals who receive it;"¹ or, again, from being desirous of "depriving" men of "all external means except the text of Holy Scripture,"² or thinking that "to inquire about the early church, the consent of Fathers, &c. . . . or to make the primitive writers a comment upon the inspired text, are but melancholy and pernicious follies,"³ or of "chiefly employing ourselves in assailing the Christian Fathers."⁴ All these are representations which ultimately only recoil upon their authors, showing most forcibly the inherent weakness of their cause, when they are compelled to attempt to make the reader believe that the theory of the great body of their opponents is something very different to the reality, and will strongly remind those who know anything of the controversial writings of the Reformation of the Popish artifices of that period. The cause of all this misrepresentation is simply this, that we affirm that Scripture is our only divine informant, and therefore of course esteem Scripture as much above everything else as that which is

¹ Newman, p. 35, and see pp. 391, 2.

² Newman, p. 192.

³ *Ib.* p. 156.

⁴ *Ib.* p. 166.

divine is above that which is human. But we do not reject as valueless, but on the contrary attach considerable value to, the writings of God's saints who lived in former times, knowing that, among much of all kinds, we may meet with much in which we may trace the footsteps of that Divine Spirit, whose gifts are bestowed at his pleasure for the edification of the Church, and we look up to Him who is promised as the Teacher of all the children of God, to enable us to separate the precious from the vile, receiving all as coming from the mouth of fallible witnesses.

And, lastly, in reply to every question as to what we mean by saying that Scripture is such a rule of faith *to every individual*, we mean that it is so to every individual who is conscious of the existence of the Scriptures and able to become acquainted with them, and is of an age and a state of mind to be responsible to God for believing what God has revealed. Every such person is bound by his duty to God to ascertain, as far as he is able, that what he may have been previously taught by man is accordant with that which God has there revealed; and if there appears to him to be any discordance between the two, to believe God's own words rather than those of men, seeing that he is responsible not to man but to God. Any arguments, therefore, derived from the absurdity of placing the Bible in the hands of a child for him to draw out a system of truth from it, or from the case of those who may be prevented by peculiar circumstances from consulting or understanding the Scriptures, fall quite wide of the mark. Such arguments evidently prove nothing, because it is clearly quite a *possible* case, at any rate, that God should have made the Scriptures such a rule, and our only divine informant, and we cannot argue from any supposed consequences of such a state of things that God has not done so. Nor is there any reason why we should suppose that the statements of either the Fathers, the Church, or the Pope, are an infallible rule of faith, or any part of it, because children and clowns may need guidance to point out the true faith in Scripture. The disadvantages under which some may labour in this respect, can be no proof that tradition is to be depended upon, or that Scripture is obscure. You will have to *teach* a child or a clown by more or less of *explanation* that things that are equal to the same are equal to one another, while I suppose no man will deny that if this proposition was in the Bible as a point of faith, the Bible could not be accused of obscurity or be said to want tradition to interpret its meaning, and be taxed with imperfection as a rule of faith in this point. A Newton may want assistance as a child to enable him to understand the most simple proposition, but it follows not that he is to be dictated to in mature age by one who taught him the alphabet.

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Such objections are most vain and foolish. They do not touch the point at issue.

I now proceed, then, to point out

II. The additional arguments by which the view here taken may be established, with a reply to the objections by which it is assailed. And

(1) Let us observe the arguments and objections derived from Scripture itself on this point.

Now here I admit at once that there is no passage of the New Testament precisely stating that the Christian rule of faith is limited to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; and for the best of all reasons, viz. that such a statement would, *at that time*, (i. e. during the publication of the books of the New Testament,) have been utterly inapplicable to the circumstances of the infant Church and untrue. For a little time there were no Scriptures of the New Testament, and the Scriptures which we possess were gradually written, and did not at once find their way into the whole Christian Church, and no one ever dreamed that the oral instructions of the Apostles were not to those who heard them as authoritative as their writings. They among whom the Scriptures were originally promulgated had been themselves hearers, that is, very many of them, of our Lord and his Apostles, and to them the unwritten word was as authoritative as the written. Consequently such a statement could only have been made as a *prospective* announcement, applicable only to a subsequent period of the Church. Was it, then, to be expected, was it, indeed, possible, that the Apostles should precisely fix the period at which, or the persons to whom, their writings would be the sole infallible rule of faith, when with the earliest Christians it would evidently depend very much upon situation and circumstances how far this was the case?

But though we have not, and were not likely to have, such an announcement in Scripture, we have there what may answer as well, the determination of a parallel case, viz. that of the Jews at the time of our Lord's incarnation. We learn clearly from Scripture, that the Canon of the Old Testament was to them at that time (the divine voice being no longer heard among them) the sole rule of faith; and that the traditions of the Fathers, notwithstanding their pretended divine origin, were not worthy of being considered the Word of God.

That the Scriptures of the Old Testament were to the Jews of that period the sole authoritative rule of faith, we have, I conceive, very sufficient testimony in Scripture. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, our Lord himself evidently refers to them as bearing that character, when he makes Abraham reply to the rich man begging for some messenger to be sent to

instruct his brethren on earth; "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." (Luke xvi. 29.) And still more clearly, in his reply to the lawyer who asked him, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" "He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou?" (Luke x. 25, 6.) And so in the scene of temptation in the wilderness, he meets the tempter at every turn with the written word as his guide and rule. (Matt. iv. 1—10.) Further; to them and to them alone our Lord constantly appealed, in proof of the truth of his doctrine, as *the* rule of judgment. "Search the Scriptures." (John v. 39.) "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures." (Matt. xxii. 29.) And so far from appealing to or even recognizing any "tradition," he (as we have seen) only mentions traditions in the way of rebuke. See Mark vii. 1—13, where "the commandment of God" and "the word of God" are identified with Scripture, and put in opposition to the "traditions" of the Pharisees, which are called *without distinction* "the commandments of men." Now the authority claimed for these "traditions" stood upon a foundation precisely similar to that upon which the supposed authority of the "traditions" of the Christian Church rest. The one were said to have been handed down from the oral teaching of Moses, through the "elders," or, as we should say, Fathers. The other from the oral teaching of the Apostles, by a similar mode of conveyance.

Moreover, it is evident from the whole of our Lord's teaching, that in his references to Scripture he appealed to the conscience of individuals as the interpreter of Scripture, and willed them to judge of the meaning of Scripture, not by "tradition," or any other pretended authority, but by their own reason and conscience. And they alone who did so could receive him, for tradition and the Church, in our opponents' sense of the words, were against him; and they who followed these guides, stifled inquiry with the observation, "Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed on him?" The doctrine of those who adopted these guides, was precisely that of our opponents; and notwithstanding the warnings of reason and conscience, they waited till the authorities of the Church, the keepers of Scripture and witnesses of tradition, should declare in his favour, and spoke of those who exercised the right of private judgment exactly as our opponents do now.

Still further, the Apostles refer to the Scriptures of the Old Testament so as evidently to show that they recognized them as bearing this character. Observe the constant references made to them by St. Paul as the rule of faith. "What saith the Scripture?" (Rom. iv. 3., xi. 2.; Gal. iv. 30.) And when he argued with the Jews, he "reasoned with them out of the Scrip-

tures." (Acts xvii. 2.) And when pleading his cause before Felix, he gives this summary of his creed, that he "believed all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets." (Acts. xxiv. 14.) And the Bereans are praised by St. Luke for referring to the Scriptures of the Old Testament as their rule of judgment, by which to try the preaching of St. Paul. (Acts xvii. 11.)

Lastly, as a full and irrefragable testimony to this truth, let us mark what St. Paul says to Timothy on this subject. "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii. 14—16.)

We thus find, then, that though there is no direct testimony in the Old Testament to its perfection as the sole infallible rule of faith to the Jews in the time of our Lord, such assuredly it was, and that for the same reason that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are to us, namely, that through the uncertainty of tradition there was nothing else which had any sufficient evidence of its being the word of God. For it might have been said then of the Old Testament, as it is now of the New, What is here written is not all that Moses and the prophets delivered, and therefore if we refuse to receive the traditions of the elders, we shall be rejecting part of what God has revealed, and making to ourselves a different rule of faith to what our forefathers had. But that the objection was worthless, is clear from the declarations of our Lord and his Apostles we have just quoted.

As, then, in the time of our Lord, the Canon of the Old Testament was the sole rule of faith *to the Jews*, notwithstanding that those who had been *contemporary* with the authors of the Old Testament Scriptures *might* have heard from them some other things of *minor* importance, which therefore entered into *their* rule of faith as derived from the same source with the Scriptures, so *to us* the Canon of Holy Scripture is the sole rule of faith, notwithstanding that those who were contemporary with the Apostles might have received from them some statements of minor importance, which came to them with equal authority as the Scriptures.

And if it is the sole rule of faith, it follows that it is the sole divine rule of practice, the rule of faith being co-extensive with divine revelation.

Further, it is to be considered that the Gospel was not a revelation *altogether* new, being, in all its great features at least, only

a development of the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, where the language of the inspired writers of the New Testament leads us to recognize a very full adumbration of its whole doctrine. Thus St. Paul describes himself to Felix as believing all things written in the law and the prophets, with a manifest reference to his Christian faith, (Acts xxiv. 14.) and when arguing with the Jews, he reasoned with them out of those Scriptures, (Acts xvii. 2,) and says, that the revelation of the mystery of God in the Gospel is "*by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.*" (Rom. xvi. 26.)¹ And the Bereans are praised by St. Luke for *judging* the doctrines preached by the Apostle Paul by the Scriptures of the Old Testament. (Acts xvii. 11.)

Consequently, we have, even in the Old Testament, an adumbratory representation of all the great truths of the Gospel.—Are we, then, to suppose, that when besides this we have four different accounts of the doctrines and precepts which our Lord delivered while on earth, and above twenty epistles by the Apostles to different churches, that we must still go beyond the Scriptures to find any important truth?

Be it observed, also, from the passage we have just quoted from St. Paul's 2d Epistle to Timothy, how perfect the Canon of the Old Testament was considered to be as a rule both of faith and practice, even sufficient to render the man of God perfect, and thoroughly to furnish him to all good works. Is not, then, the Canon of the New Testament sufficient to supply such information respecting the religion adumbrated in the Old Testament, as to render *the two Testaments together* as sufficient to us as the Old was to Timothy?

But to all such considerations our opponents seem to think that they have a ready answer, for they say that Scripture itself is in favour of their doctrine of tradition. I shall now, then, proceed to consider the passages adduced by them in proof of this

¹ It is supposed by Whitby, that the Scriptures of the Prophets here mentioned are the Scriptures of the Prophets of the New Testament; and he refers to Eph. iii. 6. in corroboration of this interpretation, where it is said that the mystery of the gospel was "not in other ages made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit," where evidently the *prophets* mentioned are those of the New Testament. But I confess, though the interpretation is possible, and would afford strong evidence in favour of the view for which we are here contending, I cannot bring myself to think that such was the meaning of the Apostle, but that he rather had in view the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament, which formed the groundwork as it were of the preaching of the Apostles and first teachers of Christianity, as we see illustrated both in the Apostolical Scriptures and the Epistle of Clement.

assertion, and show how utterly destitute of foundation is the argument so raised.

This argument is insisted upon more particularly by Mr. Keble, whose sermon is written, indeed, for the purpose of enforcing it. I need hardly say that the texts he has chosen in support of it are precisely those which Bellarmine¹ and the Romanists adduce for the same purpose; and it is somewhat strange, that the arguments by which the applicability of these texts to such a purpose has been over and over again disproved by some of the most able divines of our church, are entirely unnoticed, and the statements of Rome, even to the *petitio principii* upon which they are almost all founded, repeated almost *verbatim*.

The passages chiefly insisted upon are of course those in the Epistles to Timothy. "That good thing which was committed unto thee (την καλὴν παρακαταθήκην), keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." (2 Tim. i. 14.) "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. ii. 2.) "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust." (1 Tim. vi. 20.)²

The first of these passages forms Mr. Keble's text, and the first thing he endeavours to prove is, that "the good thing left in Timothy's charge" "was the treasure of Apostolical doctrines and church rules: the rules and doctrines which made up the charter of Christ's kingdom." (p. 20.) Now that it comprised the fundamentals of the faith is at once granted, but as to its being "the treasure of Apostolical doctrines and church rules," in the sense in which Mr. Keble has afterwards explained these words, viz. that it "contained besides the substance of Christian doctrine, a certain form, arrangement, selection, methodizing the whole, and distinguishing fundamentals, and also a certain system of church practice, both in government, discipline, and worship;" and was "something so wholly sufficient, so unexceptionably accurate, as to require nothing but fidelity in its transmitters," (p. 21,) such a notion is a pure fiction of the imagination, utterly unsupported by Scripture, or by the Fathers, who speak of this deposit (as Mr. Keble himself admits) as meaning "the truths committed by St. Paul to Timothy;" "the deposit of the faith," (Jerome) "the Catholic faith" (Vinc. Lir.)³ And this seems clearly to follow from the context of these passages. For in the first the "deposit" is mentioned immediately after the Apostle had exhorted Timothy, "hold fast the

¹ De Verb. D. lib. iv. c. 5.

² See Keble's Sermon. pp. 5, 22, and 49.

³ Sermon. pp. 18, 19.

form of [those] *sound words* which thou hast heard of me ;” and the last with the context runs thus, “Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called ; which some professing have erred concerning the *faith*.”

When, therefore, Mr. Keble says, “Upon the whole we may *assume, with some confidence*, that the good thing left in Timothy’s charge” was what we have above quoted from him, he is doing what we have but too often to lament in this controversy, “*assuming with some confidence*” what he has not the slightest right to assume at all, and what both Scripture and Fathers are opposed to ; and this interpretation, so “*assumed with some confidence*” and *no reason*, serves him afterwards in great stead. For as it is evident that we have not in Scripture such an “arrangement, selection, methodizing the whole, and distinguishing fundamentals, and also a certain system of church practice, both in government, discipline, and worship,” it enables him to jump to the conclusion, that Timothy’s deposit embraced much more than we have in Scripture, when, judging both from Scripture and the language of the Fathers, the probability is that it contained much less. And as Timothy was exhorted to keep it safely, so the more Mr. Keble can make it include, the more imperfect will Scripture appear to be, and the more important that patristical tradition which professes to hand this deposit down to us. And the great reason why Mr. Keble wants it is, that, like Bellarmine, he separates the sense of Scripture from Scripture, and makes Scripture and its meaning two different things, as if Scripture was so obscure that it could not be understood without patristical tradition.

As to the precise amount, however, which it contained, we can safely allow Mr. Keble’s imagination (which in other subjects we highly value) to have some little scope, and will willingly give him the fundamentals both of faith and worship, if only he will allow us to make use of our reason to consider how far patristical tradition is either *wanted* or to be *trusted* for conveying to us this “deposit.” But all the speciousness of Mr. Keble’s arguments, from these and similar passages of Scripture, is derived from his assuming the very point in question, i. e. the trustworthiness of patristical tradition, for all his arguments amount merely to this, that because the Apostles told their converts to recollect and act according to all which they had delivered to them by word as well as writing, therefore we are to believe and act according to all that a few Fathers of the Church have reported to us as derived from their oral teaching, or even as the doctrine of the Church in their time, because such doctrine must be considered the doctrine of the Apostles. In a word, because the Church,

in the Apostolic age, received as divinely-inspired the oral instructions of the Apostles; therefore we are to receive the patristical tradition of those traditions as an infallible and divine informant. "The holy writings themselves intimate," says Mr. Keble, "that the persons to whom they were addressed were in possession of a body of truth and duty totally distinct from themselves, and independent of them." (pp. 21, 2.) Of course they were, for the simple reason, that the Apostles preached and formed a church before they wrote. But what then? "Timothy, for instance," he adds, "a few verses after the text, is enjoined to take measures for the transmission, not of Holy Scripture, but of the things which he had heard of St. Paul, among many witnesses." How, let me ask, *could* he transmit what in all probability he had not? And when, in a subsequent page, he intimates that because Timothy was exhorted to "keep that committed to his charge," we are thereby warned to keep what patristical *tradition* has delivered to us,¹ he is unworthily assuming the very point in question.

There is one point, however, in which I fully agree with him; and that is where, after several pages of proof, he "ventures to assume," "from the nature of the case, the incidental testimony of Scripture, and the direct assertions of the Fathers," that it was "an *unwritten system*" which St. Paul spoke of, when he "so earnestly recommended the deposit;"² for nothing can be more certain than that the Gospel, before it was written, was unwritten; and, as Mr. Keble himself tells us, "the time spoken of was not the time when St. Paul was writing, but when Timothy *received his charge*."

To sum up all, then, in one word, what Mr. Keble and the Romanists have got to prove, before they can in any way avail themselves of these passages, is, (1) that Timothy's deposit embraced something of importance not in Scripture; and (2) that patristical tradition is an infallible informant as to what that deposit was; which are precisely the two points "assumed with some confidence," with scarcely an attempt at a proof.

Before, however, Mr. Keble attempts to prove the former of these two points, let me commend to his consideration the following passage to Tertullian, showing *his* opinion on the matter.

These passages, it seems, were quoted by some heretics in Tertullian's time, to prove *their traditions*,—and they inferred from them, that there were some things which were committed by the Apostles to a few only of their more trustworthy converts, and not preached openly to all; and that such was the *deposit* committed to Timothy, spoken of in these passages. But, says Ter-

¹ See p. 49.

² pp. 115, 16.

³ See p. 31.

tullian, "What is this secret deposit, that it should be reckoned as a different doctrine? Was it of that charge, of which he says, 'This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy.' [1 Tim. i. 18.] Likewise of that commandment, of which he says, 'I charge thee in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment.' [1 Tim. vi. 13.] *But what commandment and what charge?* IT WILL BE KNOWN FROM THE CONTEXT. Neither, moreover, because he admonishes him to 'commit these things to faithful men who should be able to teach others also,' [2 Tim. ii. 2.] is that to be interpreted as a proof of any hidden gospel? for when he says '*these things*,' he speaks of THOSE THINGS OF WHICH HE WAS THEN WRITING; but of hidden things he would have said, as of things absent, in the remembrance of Timothy, not '*these things*,' but '*those things*.'"¹

This passage of Tertullian, then, will, I hope, somewhat shake Mr. Keble's "confidence" in his own interpretation of the text in question.

Another of the passages brought by our opponents² in support of their views, is that in 2 Thess. ii. 15. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle." And I will venture to say that, beyond the occurrence of the word "traditions" in it, there is not a pretext for so applying it. The Epistles to the Thessalonians, we must observe, were, with the exception *possibly* of St. Matthew's Gospel, the first written of all the books of the New Testament. And St. Matthew's Gospel was written more especially, in the first instance, for the use of the Jewish converts. Consequently the Thessalonians had, at the time when these Epistles were addressed to them no other books of the New Testament. And of this Mr. Keble is fully conscious; for he says, when mentioning this text, "They could not be exhorted to hold the Christian Scripture, since at that time, in all probability, no Christian Scriptures yet existed, except perhaps St. Matthew's Gospel." (p. 22.) Much, therefore, at least, that we learn from

¹ Quod hoc depositum est tactum, ut alteri doctrine deputetur? An illius denuntiationis, de qua ait, Hanc denuntiationem commendo apud te, fili Timothee. Item illius precepti, de quo ait; Denuntio tibi ante Deum qui vivificat omnia, et Jesum Christum qui testatus est sub Pontio Pilato bonam confessionem custodias preceptum. Quod hoc preceptum et qua denuntiatio? Ex supra et infra scriptis intelligitur. Sed nec quis voluit illam hanc fidelibus hominibus demandare, qui idonei sint et alios docere, id quoque ad argumentum occulti alienius Evangelii interpretandum est. Nam cum dicit, hanc, de eis dicit de quibus in presenti scribebat: de occultis autem, ut de absentibus apud conscientiam non hanc sed illa dixisset. De Præscr. c. 25. Ed. Prior. 1664.

² See Keble's *Serm.* p. 23.

the Scriptures, must have been communicated orally to the Thessalonians by the Apostle; as, for instance, the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. They had no Scriptures professing to give them an account of our Lord's Gospel. And these were traditions which they had themselves received from the mouth of the Apostle himself. And who denies that the oral teaching of the Apostles was of equal authority with their writings? So that the argument from this passage runs thus,—Because the Thessalonians, when destitute of the Scriptures, were exhorted by the Apostle to observe all things that he had himself delivered to them, either orally or by letter, therefore we, possessing the Scriptures, are to conclude that there are important points of Apostolical teaching not delivered to us anywhere in all the various books of the New Testament, and are bound to receive patristical tradition as an infallible informant on such points. Now the chief question at issue is, whether we have that oral teaching, in any shape in which we can depend upon it, in the writings of the Fathers. And yet, in a subsequent page (p. 47), Mr. Keble applies this passage to the present day, as coolly and unhesitatingly as if we were precisely in the situation of the Thessalonians, and had been ourselves hearers of the Apostles, and received from them instructions not contained in Scripture.

To make this passage *at all* suitable to their purpose, they must show that there was something important in the oral teaching of the Apostles, which is not to be found in all the books of the New Testament; a notion, against which we can array the whole body of the Fathers; (of which it is apparent, from Mr. Newman's thirteenth Lecture, that our opponents are fully conscious; although they attempt to get over the difficulty, by asserting that, though all things essential are there, yet they are there so latently, that we cannot find them until patristical tradition has pointed them out;) or at least they must prove that the patristical tradition we possess of the oral traditions of the Apostles, is an informant sufficiently certain to bind the conscience to belief.

The same answer will suffice for a similar passage in a subsequent part of the Epistle, viz., 2 Thess. iii. 6.

Mr. Keble proceeds to cite two other passages in support of his view.

"Much later," he says, "we find St. Peter declaring to the whole body of Oriental Christians, that in neither of his Epistles did he profess to reveal to them any new truth or duty, but to 'stir up their minds, by way of remembrance of the commandment of the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour.' (2 Pet. iii. 1.) St. John refers believers for a standard of doctrine, to the

word which they had heard from the beginning, (1 John ii. 24.) and intimates that it was sufficient for their Christian communion, if that word abode in them. If the word, the commandment, the tradition, which the latest of these holy writers severally commend in these and similar passages, meant only or chiefly the Scriptures before written, would there not appear a more significant mention of those Scriptures; something nearer the tone of our own divines, when they are delivering precepts on the rule of faith? As it is, the phraseology of the Epistles exactly concurs with what we should be led to expect; that the Church would be already in possession of the substance of saving truth, in a sufficiently systematic form, by the sole teaching of the Apostles." (pp. 22, 23.)

I have given the passage in full to show the reader precisely Mr. Keble's mode of reasoning upon these texts; and one is almost tempted to ask, Can the writer be serious in making these observations, or is he sarcastically showing how utterly destitute of evidence is the cause he professes to defend. St. Peter and St. John (says Mr. Keble) refer Christians of their age to the commandments and instructions which they had received orally from the Apostles, and did not say to them, directly one or two books of Scripture had been written (which they might or might not possess), you must forget all which the Apostles told you, and be careful to believe nothing but what you find written in one or two books which have been published by the Apostles, which you must get *if you can*; and *therefore* we, who have all the books of the New Testament, including four accounts of the gospel, who have never had any instructions from the Apostles, and are at the distance of eighteen centuries from them, are to take the patristical tradition of their oral traditions as binding our consciences to belief. Such an argument, I must say, carries with it much more than its own refutation.

There remain a few other passages, which are sometimes adduced by the Romanists on this subject, which it may be well to notice before we pass on; but they are precisely similar in character to that given above from the Epistle to the Thessalonians, and need no other explanation than what has been given for that. Thus the Apostle says to the Corinthians, "I praise you brethren that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances [*καταδεχασθε τὰς παραδόσεις* traditions] as I delivered them to you." (1 Cor. xi. 2.) Well; what were these traditions? Were they anything more than what we have in Scripture; and if they did include more, where is the informant who will certify us of them? Resolve these two questions, and then proceed to apply the passage accordingly; but until these questions are satisfactorily resolved, the passage will prove no more than that the Corinthians

did right in following the precepts which the Apostle had given them, which nobody doubts. And we may observe that the Apostle has told us, in a subsequent part of the same chapter, what one of these traditions was, viz., the institution of the Lord's Supper (See ver. 23 &c.), and thus we see that the only one of these traditions which is mentioned, *we* have (as we might expect) in the Scriptures of the Evangelists.

Again, the Apostle says, "If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." (ib. ver. 16.) Now, to make this observation practically applicable to our times, we must have satisfactory evidence what the customs of the Church when under the superintendence of the Apostles were; and to make these customs binding upon the Church of our day, we must know that they were intended to be binding upon subsequent ages. I suspect, therefore, that the utmost we shall be able to get from the passage, (and an important and useful admonition too, and one which it were to be wished had been more attended to by many,) is that the peace of the Church ought not to be disturbed by individuals for the sake of their private fancies, in matters of external order not involving anything unlawful; but that the custom of "the churches of God" ought to be followed.

Moreover, the Apostle, further on in the same chapter, says, "The rest will I set in order when I come," (v. 34.) so that he might have given some directions which we do not find in his Epistle; and, of course, it is most conveniently assumed that these unwritten directions comprised a great deal of important matter respecting ordination and the sacraments, to be met with nowhere in Scripture, "*neither*," says Bellarmine, "*can the heretics prove the contrary*." This closing challenge to us to *prove the contrary*, is certainly somewhat amusing; but the learned controversialist should have recollected that it is a two-edged weapon, for *we* can just as well shape out St. Paul's "ordering" to our liking, and say that it had reference only to some minor points, and then add, "*neither can the Romanists prove the contrary*," and then the balance will be even; nay, I think it will incline in our favour, for the burthen of proof *does* rest upon those who assert that it had reference to important points not mentioned in any part of the New Testament, and a still further and equally weighty burthen of proof in behalf of the *preservation* of those directions.

Lastly, St. John says, "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I trust to come unto you and speak face to face." (2 John 12, and similarly 3 John 13—14.) "Hence," says Bellarmine, "many things were spoken by the Apostle which are not written." No doubt there

were, and when any one can certify us what they were, we are ready to receive them with reverence and delight.

These, as far as I am aware, are all the texts usually produced in support of the views of our opponents, and certainly they are all that need any answer.

With respect, then, to all these passages, I would commend to Mr. Keble's and the reader's perusal, the passage with which the former has himself supplied us from Bishop Taylor; of whom, notwithstanding all that he has written against such notions, Mr. Keble would fain make us believe that he was on his side of the question.

"Because," says the bishop, "the books of Scripture were not all written at once, nor at once communicated, nor at once received; therefore the churches of God at first, were forced to trust their memories, and to try the doctrines by appealing to the memories of others, *i. e.* to the consenting report and faith delivered and preached to other churches, especially the chiefest, where the memory of the Apostles was recent and permanent. The mysteriousness of Christ's priesthood, the perfection of his sacrifice, and the unity of it, Christ's advocacy and intercession for us in heaven, might very well be accounted traditions before St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews was admitted for canonical; but now they are written truths, and IF THEY HAD NOT BEEN WRITTEN, IT IS LIKELY WE SHOULD HAVE LOST THEM. But this way could not long be necessary, and COULD NOT LONG BE SAFE."¹

This is precisely that for which we contend, that though in the Apostolic age, before the Scriptures were written or in circulation in the Church, and where men had been instructed by the oral teaching of the Apostles themselves, or their immediate disciples under the sanction of the Apostles, those oral instructions connected with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and what Scriptures of the New were accessible, formed the rule of faith; yet that the mode of conveying those oral instructions, through a successional delivery by fallible men, "could not long be safe." We are not obliged precisely to fix the time when or the persons to whom this observation first applied. Circumstances might render it applicable in some cases earlier than in others. All with which we are practically concerned is our own case; and with respect to that, we contend that we are left utterly destitute of any sufficient evidence to substantiate to us any doctrine or statement of the Apostles but what we find in Scripture. We are removed eighteen centuries from them, and for the traditions of the first three centuries, we have but the scanty, mutilated, and probably in some respects corrupted, remains of some dozen

¹ Works x. 425. (Serm. p. 118.)

writers, united with some notoriously spurious liturgies. Where, then, I would ask, are the materials from which to extract any thing that could be received as the *catholic consent* of that period? Nay, the earliest Fathers themselves did not (as we have seen) plead even the consent of the principal churches in proof of anything but a few of the primary and most elementary principles of the faith. Tradition, therefore, was not even *then* appealed to as it is by our opponents *now*, sixteen centuries later.

Let us now proceed to notice,

(2.) The arguments and objections which may be derived from the *nature* and *character* of the Scriptures of the New Testament as it respects the *object* for which they were written.

On this head the Romanists have much to urge, showing, as they think, that the Scriptures were never intended to form the rule of faith. Thus, Bellarmine says, that if the Apostles had designed to commit their doctrine to writing, they would have composed a catechism or some similar book. But they either wrote a history as the Evangelists, or Epistles, as occasion offered, as Peter, Paul, James, Jude, and John, and in them treated of doctrine only incidentally.¹

What may be the precise view taken by our opponents on this point, I feel it difficult exactly to determine; for while they seem to wish it to be thought, that they do not sympathize with the views of the Romanists on this point, the difference seems to me to be more apparent than real, and the *appearance* of it to arise from their misconception of the real sentiments of the Romanists. Nay, more, when Mr. Newman sums up the objections of the Romanists on this ground, he mentions among them several which, though he here attributes them to others, from whom he would have us suppose that he differs, he has himself in other parts of the same work distinctly maintained. There is, indeed, in *the language* used by our opponents on this whole subject, a most extraordinary degree of confusion and inconsistency, arising from a desire to draw a distinction between their views and those of the Romanists which does not exist.

Mr. Newman says, "They [*i. e.* the Romanists] observe, it [the New Testament] is but an incomplete document on the very face of it. There is no harmony or consistency in its parts. [Do the Romanists maintain this?] There is no code of commandments, no list of fundamentals. It comprises four lives of Christ, written for different portions of the Church, and not tending to make up one whole. Then follow epistles written to particular Churches on particular occasions, and preserved, (as far as there can be accident in the world,) accidentally. Some books, as the

¹ Bellarm. De Verb. Dei. lib. 4. c. 4.

Epistle to the Laodiceans, are altogether lost; others are preserved only in a translation, as perhaps the Gospel of St. Matthew, and the Epistle to the Hebrews; some delivered down with barely sufficient evidence for their genuineness, as the second Epistle of St. Peter. Nor were they generally received as one volume till the fourth century. These are disproofs, it may be said, of any intention, either in the course of Providence, or in the writers, that the very books of Scripture, though inspired, should be *the* Canon of faith, that is, that they should bound and complete it. Also, the office of the Church as the 'keeper of Holy Writ,' seems to make it probable that she was intended to interpret, perhaps to supply, what Scripture left irregular and incomplete. On the other hand, the circumstance that religious truths can be conveyed by ordinances, or by catholic tradition, as well as by writing, seems an intimation that there is such a second Rule of Faith, equally authoritative and binding with Scripture itself." (pp. 336, 7.)

Now I beg to ask whether some, at least, of these objections do not represent Mr. Newman's own views? And does he not distinctly advocate the conclusion that Scripture is not "*the* Canon of faith?" Hear his own words in a preceding page. "The phrase 'rule of faith,' which is now commonly taken to mean the Bible by itself, would seem, in the judgment of the English Church, properly to belong to the Bible and Catholic Tradition taken together. *These two together make up a joint rule.*" (p. 327.) And as we have already shown, the view advocated by him and Mr. Keble, is that the two make a joint rule in the necessary points of faith, and in some others tradition forms the rule by itself, *i. e.* is, in fact, "a second rule of faith," and one "equally authoritative and binding with Scripture itself;" for, as Mr. Keble tells us, "the unwritten word, if it can be any how authenticated, [and the supposition is that it can] must necessarily demand the same reverence from us [*i. e.* as the written Word]." (p. 26.)

Turn we now, however, (for we should be sorry that any part of the case should be kept back,) to p. 346, and there, to our utter amazement, we find, in reply to these statements of the Romanists, a professed defence of the truth, that Scripture is "the sole canon of our faith."

Here, then, Mr. Newman has, in his desire to appear opposed to the Romanists, directly and in terms contradicted himself.

But he proceeds to prove this; and his first proof, that Scripture is "the sole canon of our faith," is derived from three "peculiarities" distinguishing it from the "unwritten word" of the Apostles. First, that "the New Testament is commonly called a testament or will," and that "*Testaments are necessarily writ-*

ten," which strikes one as about as unfortunate a remark as any we have yet had to notice. Has Mr. Newman, then, never heard of a nuncupative will? But if he had observed that nuncupative wills had always been found liable to many *frauds and impositions*, and therefore that it was likely that such a will should be, through God's mercy, *written*, in order to guard against such *frauds and impositions*, there would have been much force in the remark. His conclusion from this, however, is as follows, that "granting tradition and Scripture to come from the Apostles, it does not therefore follow that their written word was not, under God's over-ruling guidance, designed for a *particular purpose*, for which their word unwritten was not designed," (p. 346.); which seems to me a conclusion which falls far short of the premises, when it is asserted that Testaments must necessarily be written; for one would suppose from that, not merely that the written word was designed to serve a "*particular purpose*," for which the word unwritten was not designed, but that it was absolutely the sole and whole rule of faith.

The second peculiarity is, that Scripture only is inspired, that is as to the *words*, while tradition is only so as to its *substance*. (pp. 346, 7; and see Mr. Keble, p. 107.) The "third peculiarity" is, that "Scripture alone contains what remains to us of our Lord's teaching." (p. 347.)

On the ground, then, of these three *peculiarities*, it is contended that Scripture is "the sole canon of our faith;" while it is at the same time impressed upon us, that the phrase "rule of faith" belongs to "the Bible and catholic tradition taken together."

In the succeeding Lecture (the 13th,) the same orthodoxy, in *terms* not in *sense*, is retained; and we there see clearly the reason, namely, the consciousness that the Fathers refer to Scripture as *the* rule of faith.

Referring to the preceding Lecture, Mr. Newman says, that it was "intended to show how far there is a presumption that Scripture is what is commonly called 'the rule of faith,' independently of the *testimony of the Fathers, which is the direct and sufficient proof of it*;" (p. 389.) and therefore we might suppose a "direct and sufficient proof" that it was not made up of Scripture and tradition taken together. And this is so evident a deduction, that "before proceeding to the Fathers," it was very necessary for Mr. Newman to tell us what was "the point to be proved," lest we should think that their language proved much more than he would be willing to allow. The "point to be proved," then, is this, "that Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation; that is, either as being read therein, or deducible therefrom; not that Scripture is *the only ground of*

the faith, or ordinarily the guide into it and teacher of it, or *the source of all religious truth whatever*, or the systematizer of it, or the instrument of unfolding, illustrating, enforcing, and applying it; but that it is the document of ultimate appeal in controversy, and the touchstone of all doctrine [i. e. the document of appeal and touchstone not to individuals, but to the Church, and who form the Church, and how you are to get the decision of the Church, he cannot tell us.] We differ, then, from the Romanist in this, not in denying that tradition is *valuable* [mark the misrepresentation *implied* in this word] but in maintaining that by itself, and without Scripture warrant, it does not convey to us any article necessary to salvation; in other words, that it is not a rule distinct and co-ordinate, but subordinate and ministrative." (pp. 369, 70.)

So that though Scripture is "*the rule of faith*" it is not "the only ground of faith;" no; for tradition is part of the ground, even in fundamental points: nor "*the source of all religious truth whatever*," for other points to be believed, that is, other points of *faith* are to be derived from tradition. But Scripture "contains all things necessary to salvation," a confession forced by the sixth article, but explained away by supposing that it contains them so obscurely, that we cannot find them, except the unwritten word assures us that they are there, and so imperfectly, that we need tradition to give us a *complete* representation of them. And as Scripture contains all such points, it is necessary to allow that in such points there must be some Scripture warrant, while it is at the same time maintained that tradition delivers them to us much better; for, as Mr. Keble tells us, for the *full* doctrines of the Trinity, incarnation, &c., we are indebted to tradition.

And this is called, differing from the Romanists, a mistake which we have already pointed out. And the evident contradiction in these statements is attempted to be got over, by saying that tradition is "not a rule distinct and co-ordinate, but subordinate and ministrative," a mere juggle of words; for if tradition is an unwritten word of God, and conveys to us with certainty the full revelation of the truths which are but indistinctly revealed in Scripture, (as both Mr. Newman and Mr. Keble contend,) it is a rule "distinct and co-ordinate," whether they choose to call it so or not; and it is a mere mystification of the subject to draw these verbal but unreal distinctions, and one calculated only to deceive and mislead the reader. Nay more, upon this hypothesis, viz., that tradition conveys to us the full doctrines of the faith, and that the Scripture "notices" of them are only to be understood as explained and amplified by tradi-

tion, it is Scripture that is "subordinate and ministrative" to tradition, and not tradition to Scripture.

The same sort of explanation is often offered by the Romanists in defence of their statements on this subject, as for instance was done by Gother. But what says Dean Sherlock to it? "We do not," he says, "charge them with *denying in express words* the authority of the Scripture to be a rule, but with saying that which is equivalent to it, *That the sense of it is so various and uncertain, that no man can be sure of the true meaning of it, in the most necessary and fundamental articles of the faith, but by the interpretation and authority of the Church, which does effectually divest it of the authority of a rule, for that is my rule which can and must direct me, which, it seems, is not the Scripture considered in itself, but as interpreted by the authority of the Church, WHICH MAKES THE FAITH AND INTERPRETATION OF THE CHURCH, NOT THE SCRIPTURES, MY IMMEDIATE RULE.*"¹

But these terms serve to hide (I use the words in no offensive sense) the confusion, inconsistency, and self-contradiction which pervade the works of our opponents on this point. Indeed, Mr. Newman candidly confesses that he can give no reason why the Fathers, taking *his* view of tradition, as he *takes it for granted* they did, did not make it an independent informant in matters of necessary faith, but he ingenuously confesses that they did not, and therefore that we must not, (pp. 342, 3,) but must be "content to accept the canonicity of Scripture [a phrase most strangely used by him to mean that Scripture is *the* canon of the faith] on *faith*," (p. 343,) i. e. faith in patristical tradition; and so he cuts the knot by calling it "*subordinate and ministrative*," while he can give no reason why it should not be called, according to his view of it, "distinct and co-ordinate," except that the Fathers did not do so, a tolerably good proof that he and the Fathers did not take the same view of it.

Such is the labyrinth of confusion into which Mr. Newman has thrown himself that he contradicts himself over and over again within a few pages. Thus, speaking of the "consent of the Fathers" on this point, he says, "If any but the Scripture had pretensions to be an oracle of faith, would not the first successors of the Apostles be that oracle? must not they, if any, have possessed the authoritative traditions of the Apostles?" (p. 340,) and that "the tradition of the Fathers" "witnesses not only that Scripture is the record, but that it is the *sole record* of saving truth," (p. 342); and then in the very next page he says, "It may be asked, if Scripture be, as has been above represent-

¹ A Papist not misrepresented, &c. p. 19.

ed, *but* the document of appeal, and catholic tradition the *authoritative* teacher of Christians, how is it, &c. (p. 343.) So that from an intimation that Scripture is the alone oracle of faith, that the early Fathers did not possess the authoritative traditions of the Apostles, and that Scripture is the sole record of saving truth—confessions wrung from him by the testimony of the Fathers,—we jump directly to the observation that Scripture is *but* the document of appeal, and catholic tradition the *authoritative* teacher of Christians.

All this inconsistency arises from Mr. Newman having adopted the principles of Romanism on this point, while he wishes nevertheless to make it appear (even perhaps to himself) that there is some difference between him and the Romanists, and therefore he takes refuge in the labyrinth of words, through which, having led his readers backwards and forwards, he brings them out at last, (many of them quite unconsciously,) to the very standard of Romanism from which they started.

The same remark applies to Mr. Keble and Dr. Pusey. Thus the former, while he tells us distinctly in one part that Scripture and tradition make up together the rule of faith, (p. 82,) in another speaks of “reversing the claim of Scripture to be sole and paramount as a rule of faith.” (p. 81.) With respect to the latter, notwithstanding the distinctions he has attempted to draw in his “Letter” between his views and those of the Romanists, it is only necessary to compare the remarks he has there made with the extract given from him above,¹ to see that the distinctions are but verbal and not real, being precisely the same as those of Mr. Newman just noticed.

I should also remark here, that another means adopted by our opponents to get over their difficulties on this point, is by tacitly limiting the meaning of the word “faith” to *the necessary faith*, or that which is necessary to be believed in order to salvation. Thus Dr. Pusey tells us that “the doctrines of the creeds *only* are *articles of faith*, or, ‘necessary to be believed in order to salvation;’” and consequently, when Scripture is called the rule of faith, or “the sole authoritative source of the faith,” it means of “things to be believed in order to salvation;” and consequently there is left a very goodly portion of things which are not “articles of faith,” but, nevertheless, are (as by a *very nice distinction* he afterwards calls them) “subjects of belief,” to fall to the lot of tradition only; nay, it would appear from the above language, that all but the articles in the creeds belong to tradition; and, with respect to those articles, the creeds are the

¹ See p. 41—43 above.

² Dr. Pusey's Lett. to Bp. of Oxford, pp. 27—30.

authoritative interpreter of Scripture; so that how much is left to Scripture the reader may easily judge.

What may be the opinion of the reader as to this attempt to mystify him, by this use of words in a peculiar sense, I know not; but to me it appears to savour very much of disingenuousness.

Does Dr. Pusey mean to say that *all* the doctrines which God has in any manner revealed to us, are not "articles of faith?" What, then, does he mean by *faith*, or who authorized him to limit the word faith to the fundamentals of the faith or to say that the *whole* faith is comprised in "the creed?" Not, certainly, the Word of God. It is quite true that the phrases "the faith," "the rule of faith," are sometimes used by the Fathers to signify the principal articles of faith; and that modern theologians have used the phrase "the faith" in the same *technical* sense. But Dr. Pusey knows well that this is no defence for one who denies that any *but* these articles are articles of faith; which can only be true, on the supposition either that God has spoken nothing but these, or that the other parts of God's word are not objects of faith. Whatever religious truth God has delivered to us, is an article of faith; and whenever Dr. Pusey shall prove that we have, in patristical traditions, that which is in substance the Word of God, it will follow that the religious truths so delivered are articles of faith, as much as any truths of a similar kind delivered in Scripture. But here is the advantage to his cause, in using such phraseology, that by thus limiting the meaning of the word *faith* he can make use of orthodox language, and call the Scriptures, *in some sense*, the rule of faith; while he retains views utterly opposed to what he seems to admit.

As long as our opponents contend that tradition is in substance an unwritten Word of God, a divine informant, and must be joined with Scripture to make up the rule of faith, as giving the full revelation of truths but obscurely revealed in Scripture, and delivers with certainty Apostolical doctrines not in Scripture, it is utterly useless for them to pretend to draw any *real* distinction between their views and those of the Romanists; and the attempt will only involve them in inconsistencies and self-contradictions; though, of course, on account of these self-contradictions, they may be as much disowned by the Romanists as by Protestants.

Upon the whole, then, the view taken by our opponents seems to be this; that though the rule of faith is made up of Scripture and tradition taken together, yet that as Scripture contains the necessary points of faith, that is to say, obscure and imperfect *notices* of them, (for this is all which they, in fact, allow,)

therefore, taking the word *faith* to mean *the necessary faith*, Scripture may be called, *in some sense*, the rule of faith.

It is quite evident, however, that in all this management and straining of the sense of words there is some object to be gained in showing how the phrase, rule of faith, may somehow or other, consistently with their views, be applied to Scripture; and that object is an appearance of agreement with the Fathers, who do so call it. And Mr. Newman candidly confesses that they so apply this phrase, not on any grounds of *reason*, (for according to their views it is not so applicable,) but because there is a "consent of Fathers" that such is the case,¹ (as no doubt there is;) and the reason why they object to the representations of the Romanists as to the imperfect structure of the New Testament for a rule of faith is not from their thinking the observations inapplicable in the abstract, but because they think it undesirable to do more than just receive the representations of the Fathers on the point, and rest satisfied with them without going further, though indeed they themselves do this only as to the *letter* and not as to the *spirit*. And they seem to be as fearful here as they were with respect to the evidences for the inspiration of the New Testament, that if you do but exercise your reason to judge of any part of the foundation upon which your faith is resting, you will immediately relinquish it, as unworthy your confidence. And, according to their view of things, these fears are not without foundation; for, if all appearances are against Scripture being an adequate rule of faith, and it is to be believed, nevertheless that it is so, on the testimony of a few Fathers, then the less said about it the better. I shall only say, however, that having no such fears, I am not at all alarmed at seeing reason inquire into the matter.

I shall now, therefore, venture to call the attention of reason to this matter, and beg it to view very narrowly the structure of the New Testament, and see the stability of the foundation upon which is built the truth that Holy Scripture is *fitted* by its structure to be the rule of faith and practice in at least all vital points.

Let me ask, then, first, For what were the gospels composed? Were they not written to give men a complete account of the Christian religion; and are we to suppose that such accounts, written by Apostles, or published under the authority of Apostles, would fail to deliver all the vital points at least of that religion?

Of the Gospel of St. Matthew, Eusebius tells us that "Matthew having preached first to the Hebrews, and being about to

¹ See pp. 339, 340.

go to other nations, wrote the Gospel according to him in his own language, supplying by writing the want of his presence and converse among those whom he was about to leave."¹

Did he leave, then, any vital doctrine unnoticed in this book so written for such a purpose?

Or does the Gospel of St. Mark, penned by him as the Gospel preached by St. Peter, and sanctioned by Peter,² leave out any vital part of the Gospel preached by Peter? The especial object of St. Peter in having this Gospel written was, if we believe the common patristical interpretation of 2 Pet. i. 15, (and which carries upon it an air of great probability), to ensure to his followers a knowledge of the great truths of Christianity, which shows how little he was willing to trust them to oral tradition.

Besides these, we have the Gospel of St. Luke, professing to give Theophilus "a declaration of *those things* which were most surely *believed*" among Christians, that he might "know the certainty of *those things wherein he had been instructed*."

Still further,—*These three Gospels were reviewed by St. John, and published with his sanction, and he himself added a fourth, to supply what he considered desirable to make up a complete account of our Lord's life and doctrine.*³ And, connected with this fact, those words towards the close of his Gospel are more especially observable, as favourable to our view, in which he says, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. *But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.*" (John xx. 30, 31.)

And these accounts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, let us observe, were written for the information of mankind at large, not as documents for the private use of the pastors of the Church; and were diligently distributed for that purpose by the earliest teachers of Christianity;⁴ which is an important consideration in judging of their fitness to be the rule of faith to mankind.

If, then, these four Gospels do not fully and clearly deliver all the important doctrines of Christianity, I know not where we are to look for them.

But we are not left with these only; we have, besides them, above twenty Epistles, written by several of the Apostles to various Churches and individuals, in order to explain still more

¹ Lib. iii. c. 24. See, also, Chrys. in Matth. hom. 1.; and Op. Imp. in Matth. Prefat.

² See p. 382 above.

³ See Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. 24. See, also, Epiph. adv. Hær. in hær. 51. §§ 4—8.

⁴ See Euseb. H. E. lib. iii. c. 37.

fully and clearly the Christian faith. Now these, I admit, were written as occasion offered ; and if the whole of the New Testament had consisted of such writings, the objections of the Romanists on this head might have had some foundation ; but, as it is, these Epistles are merely the additional explanations vouchsafed us for our guidance and comfort, beyond the more summary accounts given us by the Evangelists ; explanations in the absence of which, much certainly of the light now enjoyed would have been wanting, and which, on account of the inspiration of their authors, form part of the divine rule of faith and practice. But had we been without these Epistles and the book of Revelation, the divine rule of faith and practice would have been limited to the four Gospels, for the very same reason that it is now limited to the Scriptures we possess, namely, that they only would have possessed any certain title to be considered as the word of God.

To all which we may add, that one of the earliest Christian writers, Irenæus, expressly tells us, that what the Apostles first preached that they afterwards wrote in the Scriptures.¹

The argument here urged is so clear and evident, that even Mr. Newman himself, when professing to oppose the Romanists, and show that Scripture is the canon of the faith, (and orthodoxy preserved, as we have already seen, in *name* and *words* only, for his real meaning is in substance precisely the same as that of the Romanists,) actually adopts it. After quoting with approbation a remark of Bishop Taylor's that "our Lord's teaching contains all things necessary to salvation," (p. 357,) of which teaching he holds Scripture to be the sole record, he remarks, "The doctrines of our faith are really promulgated by Christ himself. There is no truth which St. Paul or St. John declare, which he does not anticipate If we had only the Gospels, we should have in them all the great doctrines of the Epistles, all the articles of the Creed And this is one main reason, it would seem, why the Epistles are vouchsafed to us ; not so much to increase the Gospel, as to serve as a comment upon it, as taught by our Lord, *to bring out and fix His sacred sense, lest we should by any means miss it ;*" (pp. 360, 1.) And yet, after all, we must go (Mr. Newman says) to tradition for the full development of those truths, for they are neither *fully* nor *clearly* revealed in Scripture, and the chances are seriously against any one being able to learn them from Scripture. And in order to oblige us, if possible, to receive "tradition" as a part of the rule of faith, the Scriptural foundation of some of the most important doctrines of the faith is cavilled

¹ Iren. adv. Hær. iii. 1.

at as quite insufficient. Now these two statements can only be reconciled on one of these two suppositions, either that the Apostles purposely kept back something, when they professed to give mankind an account of our Lord's teaching, and explain in their Epistles his doctrine, or that, though they were inspired, they were unable to give a clear account of the matter; on which latter supposition, by the way, the tradition of their oral teaching will not give us much additional help.

This is another rather curious specimen, as it appears to me, of the windings of Mr. Newman's labyrinth.

I proceed to notice,

(3) The arguments and objections which may be derived from other general considerations.

And here let us observe,

First.—The committal of the Gospel to writing *at all*, is a strong argument in favour of *the whole* revealed faith, that is, in all important points at least, having been committed to writing. For why was it written at all, and not left to be communicated to mankind by the oral teaching of the disciples of the Apostles and their successors to the end of the world; but that its perpetuation would thus have been endangered, that is in other words, but for the uncertainty of "tradition?" And if they committed to writing one part of the doctrines they delivered on this account, did not the same reason operate equally strongly for committing the whole to writing; that is, all that was of vital importance to Christians? Why should any important part be left out in all the four accounts, when they were written for the purpose of giving the Christian world the best information on the doctrines of Christianity? Is it reasonable to suppose that this should be the case? especially when we recollect that the first three were reviewed by the author of the last, and that last written to make their account *more* complete? Can we venture to think them guilty of such an inconsistency, guided as they were by the Divine Spirit in all such matters?

And the same argument operates with equal force in favour of their having delivered those doctrines clearly and fully. For the great object to be attained by committing them to writing, was to prevent their being corrupted through the imperfections or corrupt prejudices of human nature; but if they were not clearly and fully delivered, and it was left to "tradition" to hand down the "full doctrine," they would be almost as much exposed to such corruption as they would have been had they not been written; and there cannot be charged upon the writers any incapability of delivering those doctrines clearly and fully.

Secondly.—Patristical tradition cannot be, practically, any part of the rule of faith or practice to men in general, for it has

to be evolved from a multitude of volumes, by a process which renders it practically inaccessible to the great bulk of mankind.

For how are men, generally, to obtain a knowledge of what is called primitive catholic consent? Supposing it to be deducible from the records of antiquity which remain to us (which it is not,) how are men generally to find out that which is derived from a careful comparison and survey of a whole library of volumes?

But it may be said, it is delivered to them by others whom they may safely trust. But what assurance have they of this? Is it so very easy a task to determine infallibly the opinion of the whole primitive church respecting any contested doctrine? Oh! yes, saith Mr. Newman, "the doctrine of the Apostles" is "an historical fact, and ascertainable as other facts, and obvious to the intelligence of inquirers as other facts;" "the church enforces a fact—Apostolical tradition." (pp. 224, 5.)

Now we have already so fully entered upon this point in a former chapter, that I need not, I hope, add one word here for the overthrow of such a notion. It is only surprising how any one at all acquainted with the matter, could risk such an assertion. And, in truth, Mr. Newman himself seems aware that this *obvious fact* may be anything but *obvious* to many; and hence he is forced, at last, to take refuge, like the Romanists, in the infallibility of the Church, and, "that doctrine which is true considered as an historical fact, is true also because she [the Church] teaches it" (p. 228.); and therefore, if any one ventures to think for himself as to what this "fact" is by a survey of the writings of the Fathers, if he concludes contrary to what "the Church" teaches, his mouth is stopped at once by the plea of the infallibility of the Church, so that he might as well spare himself the labour of inquiring, and take all at once from the hands of the Church, which, indeed, is the happy state to which our opponents seem to wish to reduce us. Thus, all questions are, at last, swallowed up in the quicksand of church-infallibility.

And the curious part of this matter is, that Mr. Newman, instead of boldly telling us, like the Romanists, what and who "the Church" is, fairly intimates that he is at a loss to do so; but asks with great simplicity whether we cannot consider our own church as able to answer the purpose; so that after all the high-sounding words about the teaching of "the Church,"—"the catholic Church," it turns out that, *practically*, this means the teaching of a company of men, occupying a section of a little island at one corner of the world. Surely, says Mr. N., she "transmits the antient catholic faith simply and intelligibly;" "to follow the Church, THEN, in this day, is to follow the prayer-book." (p. 313.) No doubt we who belong to her think so. But how did we *find out* that she "transmits the antient

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catholic faith?" Are all men bound to take her word for it? So, then, after all this vapouring about the infallibility of the Church's teaching, there is no teaching to be found to which such a high-sounding name belongs. To talk, indeed, of the teaching of the Church catholic, either as consisting of the whole body of professing Christians, or of the true children of God, or even of the pastors of the Church, is a manifest absurdity; for the suffrages of either body never were and never could be collected, and to such a consent only could the idea of freedom from error be attached.

Patristical tradition, then, cannot be practically any part of the infallible rule of faith to mankind; because, to the majority, it is not accessible. The doubt and uncertainty hanging over it in *all* cases, are to the great majority of mankind doubled; and it comes to *them*, at least, with such a probability of alloy and corruption, that it absolutely needs to be tried and tested by some touchstone which can be depended upon, to show them what in it may be agreeable to truth, and what otherwise. In other words, *instead of being any part of the rule, it must be itself judged by the rule.*

Thirdly.—So clearly is Scripture set forth by the Fathers as the rule of faith, that our opponents are forced to admit that in necessary points, (to which, for their own purposes, they would fain limit the use of the word faith,) that title cannot be denied to Scripture. This forced admission, then, is, as it respects these points at least, fatal to their cause; for if in these it is, as they in *words* admit, the canon or rule of faith, then tradition is not in these points any part of the rule.

For that which is the rule of faith to men in necessary points, is that by which necessary faith is to be regulated and *measured*; and it is contrary to the nature of a rule, to receive either addition or diminution in those respects for which it is a rule. And so the Fathers say. Thus Chrysostom, who calls the Scriptures "the rule of all things,"¹ that is, all religious truth, says, "A rule receives neither addition or diminution, otherwise it ceases to be a rule." And Basil, reproving Eunomius for saying that the creed, while he called it a standard and rule, needed an addition to make it more accurate,² observes that this is the extreme of folly, for that "a standard and rule, as long as nothing is wanting to them to make them a standard and rule, admit no addition for greater accuracy. For an addition is wanting only to sup-

¹ See under Chrysostom in ch. 10 below.

² 'Ο Κανὼν οὐτὶ προσθίσιν οὐτὶ ἀφαιρέσει δέχεται, ἐν τῷ κανὼν ὅσαι ἀπολλύει. In Ep. ad Phil. c. 3. hom. 12. (Ed. Bened. tom. xi. p. 293.)

³ Προσθίσεις ἀκρίβειάς δέσθαι. Adv. Eunom. lib. i. § 5. Ed. Bened. tom. i. p. 213

Fourthly.—Our opponents allow that, in all fundamental points, Scripture is the document of proof; and that Scripture proof of all such doctrines is absolutely necessary; a concession which, if they did not make, might be forced from them, *upon their own principles*, by the testimony of the Fathers.¹ Now *this concession is absolutely summarily fatal to their cause*, as far as the fundamentals of the faith are concerned.

For if Scripture proof is required in all such doctrines, then whether it be required for the satisfaction of "the Church" or an individual, such proof *exists* in Scripture *for all*; and such proof can exist only *as far as the doctrine is there revealed*. Any amplification or fuller statement of the doctrine derived from any other source, cannot, as far as concerns the additional ideas conveyed, receive any proof from Scripture. He who states the doctrine more clearly or fully (as he may think) than Scripture, cannot have Scripture warrant for his statements. If, therefore, Scripture proof is required for the fundamentals of the faith, then, in such points, Scripture is the sole rule of faith; for, by the declarations of Scripture, our faith, as it respects such points, *must* be measured and *bounded*. Not only are we not *required* to believe more, but it is *at our peril* to add to what is there revealed; for our faith has then *no proper foundation* to rest upon.

It is true that patristical tradition may be very useful as a teacher, in pointing out to us what Scripture does contain and prove, by drawing out and illustrating its sense; and is, on many accounts, if we will but remember to use it with proper caution, a valuable interpreter of Scripture. But the doctrines which it teaches us have authority over our faith, only so far as they appear to us to be authorized by, and proveable from Scripture. I say as far as they *appear to us* to be so, because we are responsible to God *individually*; and having what all allow to be his Word in the Scriptures, we are responsible to him for believing what in our consciences we believe to be the meaning of his Word. It is useless to reply that we may possibly in such a case have an immense majority of the professing Christian Church against us, or that possibly we may interpret the Scriptures wrongly. For not to say that majorities are no proof of truth, and that we hold *with the Fathers* that all the fundamentals of faith and practice are, to the humble inquirer, plain in Scripture, and that the promises of God insure success to the inquiries of the sincere and humble-minded, we hold it to be a truth alto-

¹ I hope to show fully hereafter, when quoting the testimonies of the Fathers, that they, or at least many of them, not only held that the fundamental doctrines of the faith must be proved from Scripture, but that *all* the doctrines of the Christian religion must be so proved.

gether undeniable, that if we are certain that God has spoken to us, and are convinced in our consciences that what he has said means this or that, nothing ought to be allowed to move us from a faith so taken up; and if we err, the fault is with us, and our judgment not with fallible man, but with God.

But this subordination of patristical tradition to Scripture, our opponents cannot think of allowing; for though in *words* they admit Scripture to be the document of proof, and will talk of the necessity of Scripture proof for the fundamental doctrines, there is nothing which they less admit in reality, either as it respects the Church, or individuals.

Their favourite phrase on this subject is, that "tradition teaches, Scripture proves:"¹ by which they mean to intimate that Scripture is insufficient to *teach*, but sufficient to prove, (a tolerably strange contradiction to begin with;) and the reason is, that Scripture contains only obscure "*notices*" of the necessary doctrines, but tradition has handed down these doctrines *fully* and *clearly*. We must, therefore, learn these doctrines from tradition; and regard the *obscure notices* of these doctrines in Scripture, as *proving* all that tradition has delivered to us respecting them. Our opponents, it would seem, are easily satisfied as to *proofs*, when it suits their hypothesis to be so. But certainly with their view of the nature of faith, we cannot be surprised at this. For the less the evidence the better. Its doubtfulness is a *recommendation*, Mr. Newman tells us, and gives an opportunity for faith to be "generous." On any other hypothesis, however, it is difficult to see how that which contains only obscure notices of a doctrine, notices only to be understood by the aid of tradition, can be said to *prove* that doctrine. The inconsistency is so glaring, that to quote authorities to show it, seems almost superfluous; but there are some remarks of our excellent Archbishop Tension, so much to the purpose on this point, that I cannot refrain from quoting them. "The Romanists," says the Archbishop, "declare that the Scriptures are so obscure, even in matters of faith, that *the people*, without an infallible guide, *cannot find out the true sense of them*. If this doctrine of theirs be true, it is most absurd for them to go about to prove their articles to the people out of the Scriptures, seeing that supposeth the Scriptures clearer than those articles; for that by which any thing is proved, is to be more known and certain, than that which is proved by it. This way, likewise, sets up the people as judges of the sense of these Scriptures which they offer to them in the main points in difference; that is, they now confess the people can judge of that of which

¹ Keble, p. 114.

they yet say they cannot judge, *by reason of their weakness, and the obscureness of the Holy Writings*. BUT WHEN MEN HAVE A MIND TO PROCEED IN A CAUSE, IT IS NOT A CONTRADICTION THAT CAN STOP THEM. Therefore, notwithstanding this, and very much more of the like nature, which might be alleged against this way of proceeding, as *plainly inconsistent*; still amongst the weak, who discern not the absurdity, and have not skill to set their methods one against another, they make their boast of *Scripture proofs* for their religion, and against ours."¹ Thus Mr. Husbeth tells us, "Let it be further remarked, that *when* the Catholic Church has declared the sense of Scripture, and deduced certain doctrines from it, we may then, as Scotus has also remarked, confidently assert that they can be MANIFESTLY PROVED from Scripture."² So that if "the Catholic Church" was to declare that Scripture said that black was white, we might then "confidently assert" that it might be "manifestly proved" from Scripture. No matter what Scripture says, but if the Catholic Church declares that it says this or that, then this or that may be "*manifestly proved*" out of it.

Moreover, it would be worth knowing how it is that since tradition is an unwritten Word of God, we have any *need* of Scripture *proof*, after tradition has taught us the faith, and that more clearly and fully than Scripture can. It seems, at any rate, needless trouble to go any further. For if tradition is in substance the Word of God, it *proves* the truth of what it delivers, as well as Scripture could; for one word of God is worthy of equal reverence, and is of equal authority, with any other. "If we will be impartial, says Mr. Keble, "we cannot hide it from ourselves that God's unwritten word, if it can be any how authenticated, [and the position contended for is that it can be authenticated, and is to be found in the Fathers,] must necessarily demand the *same reverence* from us [i. e. as his written word,] and for exactly the same reason, because it is his word."³ Certainly; and therefore to send us to the obscure notices of Scripture for proofs of a doctrine which the "unwritten word" has delivered to us clearly and fully, is most unreasonable. So that at best this observation as to "tradition teaching and Scripture proving," is, in the sense in which they mean it, full of absurdity and inconsistency.

There is a sense, indeed, in which this phrase, "tradition teaches, Scripture proves," is true enough; and states a fact which occurs in the case of most individuals, who are first taught

¹ Popery not founded on Scripture. Lond. 1688. 4to. Introduction, p. 12.

² Reply to Faber, 3d. ed. p. 247.

³ p. 26.

principally by creeds and catechisms, which have been handed down from generation to generation, for a longer or shorter time ; but then tradition is not here taken as meaning anything derived from the oral teaching of the Apostles, as if we had anything which could be considered as coming to us with Apostolical authority,—and the learner is also taught that the truths so delivered to him rest altogether upon the authority of Scripture ; and are obligatory upon him only so far as they are authorized by Scripture ; and to Scripture he is exhorted to go, as soon as he is able to examine for himself, and make Scripture testimony the sole ground of his faith.

It is no proof that those who have come to years of discretion do not *learn* the doctrines of the faith from Scripture as *the sole ground of their faith*, that they have *first been made acquainted with them* through the medium of a creed, or catechism, or elementary work. A child or uneducated person may thus take the doctrines of Christianity upon the word of the parent or teacher, this being all the satisfaction they *may* be capable of as to the truth of those doctrines. But even this is not, strictly speaking, traditionary teaching, for he who teaches, if he knows his duty, will (whatever *formula* he may make use of in the way of creed or catechism, &c.) teach those doctrines only for which he has Scripture proof. And the child, when he comes to years of responsibility to God, is bound to examine the book of God for himself, *as far as he is able*, to see whether what he has been taught is agreeable to what is there delivered, and thus to *learn* his faith, as a being responsible to God, from Scripture as the sole ground of it. Nor is there any inconsistency, as our opponents insinuate, in giving what is called “the Apostles’ creed,” as the summary of our belief, and yet asserting that the Scripture is the sole ground of our faith, and that we have *learned* the faith from Scripture, inasmuch as the reason why we receive that creed is, as our church expresses it, because it may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture. (Art. 8.) And as the language of the early church may have greater weight with our opponents in proof of this, I will give them an unexceptionable instance of a very early date, viz., in the language used by the Fathers assembled at the Synod against Noetus, who after repeating the creed in the usual form of that period, immediately add, “We maintain these doctrines, HAVING LEARNED THEM FROM THE DIVINE SCRIPTURES.”¹

And hence we may observe the confusion and inconsequential reasoning that mark the following observation of one of the Tract

¹ Ταῦτα λέγουσι, μεμαθησέντες ἀπὸ τῶν θείων γραφῶν. Epiphanius. hæc. Nest. 57. Ed. Petav. vol. i. p. 480.

writers, who says,—“It is *to be observed*, that where separatists hold the catholic truth, they hold it not *from Scripture only*, nor others, on the *plea* of Scriptural authority, deny the same, [mark the logic of this, that because some plead Scripture in defence of error, *therefore* nobody can find the truth in it,] but from tradition supplied by the Church, which has been to them *the key to the Scriptures.*”¹ As if men could not hold the truth *from Scripture only*, where tradition supplied by the Church may have been, in the first instance, the key to the Scriptures. Why this very thing, which they tell us “it is to be observed” cannot be, is precisely what is contended for by their supposed friends, Hooker and Archbishop Laud. Speaking of the tradition supplied by the Church, the Archbishop says, “It serves to work upon the minds of unbelievers to move them to read and to consider the Scripture. . . And secondly, it serves among novices, weaklings, and doubters in the faith, to instruct and confirm them *till they may acquaint themselves with and understand the Scripture*, which the Church delivers as *the Word of God.*”

. . . No man can set a better state of the question between Scripture and tradition than Hooker doth: his words are these:—“*The Scripture is the ground of our belief: the authority of man (THAT IS THE NAME HE GIVES TO TRADITION²) is the key which opens the door of entrance into the knowledge of the Scripture.*”³

The tradition supplied by the Church may be, and perhaps generally is, the means of first introducing men to a knowledge of the truths of Scripture; but the ground of faith to one who has Scripture in his hands, and is sufficiently capable of judging to be responsible to God for forming a right judgment, and the sole infallible ground of faith to all, is Scripture.

Further, when we come to inquire what our opponents mean when they say that Scripture is to be referred to for *proof*, we shall find that, practically, it amounts to nothing. They are forced to admit it in *words* because they see plainly that the Fathers admitted it, while (as in other cases) they in effect altogether deny it. For neither “the Church,” nor any individual, may understand Scripture as meaning anything else than what “tradition” teaches as its meaning. So that though they talk of the necessity of going to Scripture for proof, and believing only what Scripture proves, they, in fact, mean not Scripture, but the interpretation given to Scripture by “tradition,” that is, in other words, “tradition.” Their appeal, therefore, is not to Scripture proof, but to “tradition” saying that Scripture proves it. When

¹ Tract 80. p. 65.

² These are the Archbishop's words.

³ Reply to Fisher, § 16. n. 21 & 25.

talking of Scripture proof, then, they are merely trifling with us and throwing dust into the eyes of men to blind them to the real state of the case, just as the Papists do when they send us to the Scriptures for a proof of the infallibility of their church, which if we cannot find in the texts they quote for it as proof, we are rated as infidels for presuming to suppose that texts quoted by infallibility as meaning this or that, can possibly mean anything else.

The Church herself, when proving the truth from Scripture, is "a witness of catholic truth delivered to her in the first ages, whether by Councils, or by Fathers, or in whatever other way," and "does not claim any gift of interpretation for herself, in the high points in question," but "hands over the office to catholic antiquity." "Much less does she allow individuals to pretend to it."¹ In them it would be a high crime and misdemeanour to go to Scripture to judge for themselves, whether there was any sufficient proof of what the Fathers have delivered on these points, for "the popular view," "that every Christian has the right of making up his mind for himself what he is to believe, from personal and private study of the Scriptures," is "*so very preposterous*"—"something so very strange and wild," that Mr. Newman is "unable either to discuss or even to impute such an opinion to another."² "In what our articles say of Holy Scripture as the document of proof, exclusive reference is had to teaching. It is not said that individuals are to infer the faith, but that the Church is to prove it from Scripture. . . . The sole question in the articles is, *how the Church is to teach*." And it is "in matters of inferior moment" only that either the Church or the individual "have room to exercise their own powers."³ So that both the Church and all individuals are bound hand and foot to the Fathers, and dare not think of inquiring for themselves what Scripture means, and what it proves, but only what "tradition" says that it means and proves. And the way in which individuals are to use the Scriptures, is thus described:—"We think NO HARM CAN COME from putting the Scripture into the hands of the laity, [a very gracious concession to God's word, certainly] *allowing* them, if they will, to *verify* by it, AS FAR AS IT EXTENDS, the doctrines they have been *already taught*."⁴

Of what use, then, is it to go to the Scriptures at all, for what difference is there between believing a doctrine because "tradition" declares it, and believing it because "tradition" says that Scripture declares it? And moreover, by not going to Scripture, we avoid the danger of being obliged to believe that Scripture

¹ Newman's Lect. p. 323.

² Ib. pp. 173, 4.

³ Ib. pp. 323, 4.

⁴ Ib. p. 325.

⁵ Ib. p. 167.

means something different to what it seems to us to say, which undeniably is a trying dose to swallow, however easy it may be for Mr. Newman to write the prescription, which he thus does without any apparent hesitation—" *When the sense of Scripture, as interpreted by reason, is contrary to the sense given to it by catholic antiquity, we ought to side with the latter,*" which is part of "the theory of *private judgment*," "as," he conceives, "*the English Church maintains it.*"¹

We are obliged to him for thus speaking out, because after all this there can be no mistake; and we thus clearly see what their favourite saying, that "tradition teaches and Scripture proves," really means, viz., that "tradition teaches and tradition proves," and that *practically* from end to end "tradition" is all in all; and that if any one goes to Scripture, it must be not to ascertain what appears to him to be its meaning, but only to try to find in it a confirmation of those doctrines which "tradition" has delivered to him, and thus, instead of "tradition" being used for the confirmation of the doctrines derived by us from Scripture, Scripture is put down into the subordinate office of affording a confirmation to what "tradition" has delivered.

Patristical tradition may be, and no doubt is, useful in leading men to a right interpretation of Scripture, and has a moral persuasive power in inducing them to embrace the truth. But to assert that we must believe only in accordance with what tradition tells us is the meaning of Scripture, is, in fact, to bring us to tradition as the rule of faith. For the very assertion supposes that Scripture bears another sense besides that given to it by tradition. Now a man may believe that other sense to be the true sense, and that the sense given by tradition in any particular point is as far from the true meaning as others think his to be. If, then, he is bound to believe the traditional interpretation, and so to believe a doctrine which he cannot find in Scripture, and the truth of which appears to him only to rest upon tradition, his faith in that doctrine, whatever it be, rests upon tradition, and tradition is his rule of faith. It is an old Roman Catholic cavil against us, that to interpret Scripture by fancy is the same thing as to follow fancy, which is very true, though a very futile argument against us. By the same argument, then, to interpret Scripture by tradition is to follow tradition.

And if the views of the Tractators are correct, the loss of Scripture altogether would be of no importance. For it contains only brief and obscure notices of the truth, while "tradition" delivers it clearly and fully. And when they speak of tradition as the in-

¹ pp. 160, 161.

terpreter of Scripture, this cannot be understood as if it had less intrinsic authority than Scripture, because they hold it to be, in substance, equally the word of God with Scripture. It has an authority independent of Scripture, as flowing from the same source. Scripture and tradition are not like a law and a judge's interpretation of it, but like two authoritative publications of a law, of which one is brief and obscure, and the other full and clear, of which, therefore, the latter supersedes the former.

All this arises, of course, from the supposition that "tradition" is the word of God, in which case I should quite agree with our opponents, that our reason was not to be put in competition with it. But first let it be proved to be so;¹ and, at any rate, let us be spared these contradictory statements, that serve only to catch the unwary, and perplex the uninitiated reader, and are so little to the credit of our common Christianity.

All these self-contradictions spring from our opponents being committed to two opposite systems. Belonging to the Church of England, and striving to make their views appear conformable to her articles, while at the same time they have embraced and are endeavouring to inculcate doctrines entirely opposed to them, and which they were, in fact, intended to repress, their statements are often entirely opposed to one another. Thus, the concession here made about Scripture being the document of proof, is evidently forced from them by the 8th Article of our Church, while it is one altogether opposed to their whole system, and is elsewhere almost in terms contradicted.

I now proceed to notice the *objections* which have been brought against the notion that Scripture is the sole authoritative rule of faith.

Some of these have been already noticed in connexion with the subjects of previous chapters. Others I shall consider when pointing out Scripture as the Judge of controversies, and the two principal, viz., the alleged imperfection and obscurity of the Scriptures will form the subjects of the two following chapters.

But there are three which I shall notice here.

First, it is objected that Scripture cannot be the sole authori-

¹ The reader may hence estimate the value of the observation of Dr. Hook, that they who imply that "the advocates of the English Reformation," as he is pleased to term them, "elevate tradition above the Bible, or that they place tradition on an equality with it," insinuate "*a gross and uncharitable falsehood.*" (Visit. Sermon. p. 64.) I shall not imitate Dr. Hook in the use of such language, but shall very willingly leave the matter to the common sense of mankind to determine; and that common sense will often give as true a verdict as a hasty reasoner, though a divine, wedded to a favourite hypothesis, and involved in a labyrinth of high-sounding words and phrases which serve him in the place of truths and realities.

tative rule of faith to men, because a great number of men are not qualified to deduce the faith from it.¹

To this objection we have already replied in a measure, but we shall here endeavour to show more fully how idle is this cavil against it. Suppose that a great number of persons were in such a situation, (which, however, we altogether deny, as far as regards the fundamentals of the faith,) will that prove that God has given us any other infallible guide? Will it make patristical tradition, Councils, or Pope, a sure and divine informant? It is useless to reply, that if one of them is not so, God has not provided us with the means of salvation. For the question then would be, what is necessary to salvation? Is it necessary for any man to believe more than what Scripture plainly teaches? It is not for us to argue from what we may think it would have been desirable for God to do, but to accept with thankfulness what he *has done for us, and act according to the circumstances in which we find ourselves placed.* The question, then, as to whether Scripture is or is not the sole rule of faith, must be determined independently of any such considerations as that which is here urged as an objection to its being so considered.

Moreover, such cases could not prove that, to men of but common education, Scripture was not well able to answer the purpose of a rule; and so, after all, would be but cases of a peculiar kind, not affecting our position as it regarded persons of any education.

Mr. Newman, indeed, tells us, that "the great proportion even of educated persons have not the accuracy of mind requisite for determining" the faith from Scripture, (p. 175); and that "Scripture is not so clear as to hinder ordinary persons who read it for themselves from being Sabellians," &c. (p. 178,) which is as much as to say, that the *inspired* writers of the Gospels have so imperfectly fulfilled their professed task of delivering the Gospel to the world, that even educated persons cannot tell what they mean; and to lay the blame of any misunderstanding, not upon the corrupt prejudices or carelessness of mankind, but upon inherent obscurity in the inspired Scriptures.

But, further, take the case of even an illiterate man. You want to instruct him in the truths of Christianity. Can you teach him what they are, better than our Lord and his Apostles, who wrote the books they have left us for the instruction of mankind at large in the doctrines of the faith? He will find difficulties in his way (it may be said) in acquiring a knowledge of these

¹ See Mr. Newman, Lect. 6, and "A rational account of the doctrine of *Roman Catholicism* concerning the Ecclesiastical Guide in Controversies of Religion, by R. H., 2nd ed. 1673. Disc. ii. c. 5. § 41. p. 139.

truths from them. Will he find none, then, in your teaching? Will he find Mr. Newman's Treatise on Justification, for instance, an easier way of arriving at the truth than St. Paul's account of the doctrine?

Still further, suppose this illiterate man, wishing to arrive at the knowledge of the truth, goes first, (lured by the high-sounding terms "Vicar of Christ," "Church," "infallibility," &c.) to a Romanist for an explanation of this doctrine, and being not quite satisfied, (as I hope, without offence to our opponents, may be supposed to be the case,) turns to Mr. Newman, and being so unfortunate as still not to have found what speaks peace to his conscience, turns to other interpreters of the doctrine of our Church for aid, and finds, upon comparison, that all three speak different language, and all three stoutly aver that patristical tradition is on their side. What is the poor man to do under such circumstances? May he not, without offence to our opponents, justly say, I must betake myself to that which all of you agree to be the word of God, and believe that which seems to me to be authorized by that word? Nay, I beg to ask, what else can he reasonably do?

Once more, let us suppose such a man to fall unhappily into the hands of Arians? All the three parties he formerly consulted will certainly agree here, but the Arians will tell him that they are altogether wrong. And here, again, both sides will appeal to patristical tradition; and the latter will tell him, that some even of their opponents were obliged to allow that the Ante-Nicene Fathers were against them, and that Arius appealed to tradition as in his favour. What, then, is he to do here? Is it very unreasonable for him to doubt whether anything brought to him under the name of patristical tradition can be considered an unwritten word of God? Is it very unreasonable for him to go to what both sides consider the word of God, and to think that such passages as declare that "the Word was God," (John i. 1.) that "Christ is over all, God blessed for ever," (Rom. ix. 5.) that say of him, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," (Heb. i. 8,) and that call him "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty," (Rev. i. 8,) go as near to settle the question as all which both sides have ever offered him? Is it very unreasonable for the poor illiterate man to say, I can understand this, and I know it to be God's word, and am content; but nine-tenths of the arguments which patristical tradition and controversialists have supplied me with, are no doubt very learned and forcible, but quite beyond my reach, for I know nothing of Greek, or the principles of criticism, or anything of the kind, but still I do think that nothing can be plainer than these texts, and therefore I must let

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those who will, and can, wrangle on, while I rest here. At any rate, this is my safest course, with whatever difficulties it may be beset; for though you agree in hardly anything else, you all tell me that the Bible is the Word of God, and therefore, if I humbly endeavour to follow that, I am surely in the safest path; and when you learned men have settled your difference, I shall be happy to hear from you again.

But if our opponents say, all this may be very true, but then this poor man is bound to follow "the Church," I beg to ask upon whom he is to depend to point out "the Church" to him. Christians are as much at variance about this (as far as it can be a guide) as about any thing else; and if it be added, that the marks of the true Church are such as to carry conviction to the mind of any one who can reason properly on such a matter, then you have turned your poor illiterate man into one able to judge where even able and learned men disagree, and therefore surely able to understand the plain statements of Scripture respecting the fundamentals of the faith. And if the Catholic church is so easily discerned, will our opponents have the goodness to point it out with a little more precision than they have yet done, and then still further tell us (the most important point of all) how the voice of *that* Church can be so heard by this illiterate man as to be to him an *infallible guide*. Is he to read, or get others to read to him, all that the Fathers have written, and thus determine what is the meaning of Scripture? The very notion is absurd. The question, then, is, whether he is to take as his guide the word of God itself in the Scriptures, or the opinion of men as to the meaning affixed to that word by patristical tradition. In one way, God speaks to him immediately, and *that voice can never be heard by man without rendering him responsible for obeying it*; in the other, he is left at the mercy of fallible men.

Our opponents, then, may conjure up as many difficulties as they please in the way of this poor man's arriving at a correct knowledge of the faith, and difficulties no doubt there are, (though, blessed be God, if he be a sincere and humble-minded inquirer, he has a heavenly guide who will not fail him,) but I beg to ask, *what can be the standard of truth to such a man, amidst all the diversity of sentiment around him, but his Bible?* If you take away that as his rule of faith, you leave him either at the mercy of the party among whom he happens to be born, or to be tossed about without any guide, on a sea of opinions upon which the wind is blowing from all quarters of the compass simultaneously.¹

¹ Another objection brought by Mr. Newman, but which it really seems unnecessary to notice more prominently than in this note, is actually derived from the

The second objection which I would here notice is this, That heretics, and men advancing erroneous views, have always appealed to Scripture in proof of their errors, and therefore that Scripture cannot be the sole rule of faith.¹

Now, first, this is not true ; for, as we have already seen, many of the heretics appealed to the interpretation of Scripture given by tradition ; others appealed to the Scriptures in a corrupt and mutilated state, adulterated to serve their purposes, (an appeal which is no evidence against the assertion that *the* Scriptures are competent to be the sole rule of faith, and moreover to determine controversies of faith); others tried to deter men altogether from the study of the Scriptures ; and the appeal, where made, was made to a few isolated passages, not to a connected view of the whole testimony of Scripture upon the subject.² And much the same may be said of modern heretics.

But suppose it were otherwise, will that prove that Scripture is not our sole rule ? Because heretics, conscious of the claims of Scripture upon us, have endeavoured to make it speak their views, are we to libel the word of God, by accusing it of insufficiency to teach men the truth, and be their rule of faith ? When the devil tried to deceive our Saviour by quoting Scripture, did our Lord send him to tradition for the truth ? Did he not, on that as on every other occasion, go to the written word as *the* rule ?

Nay, more, when heretics appeal to Scripture, does it not tend to show how clearly the common sense of mankind points out Scripture as the rule of faith, when those who are condemned by it feel themselves obliged to refer to it, and make it appear, if possible, in their favour ? They indeed, who do not fear to accuse the Scripture of indistinctness and obscurity, may answer this in the negative ; but they who have some remaining reverence for God's word will, I think, hesitate to do so. For surely, if men can thus distort the meaning of God's word, they can do the same to the writings of the Fathers, if they think it worth their while ; and this, indeed, is what has been done in some cases by those who cared to obtain the support of the Fathers.

"prejudices" of men, (p. 175,) from the "force prepossessions have in *disqualifying us* from searching Scripture dispassionately for ourselves." (p. 180.) So that Scripture cannot be the sole authoritative rule of faith, *because* men will read it under the influence of prejudices and prepossessions ! To state such an argument is to demolish it. That imperfect education, and the prevalence of prejudices and prepossessions, render such teaching as will instruct the reason of men, and tend to remove their prejudices and prepossessions, most valuable, from whatever quarter it may come, is most true, but the argument derived from them by Mr. Newman is utterly untenable.

¹ See Mr. Newman. Lect. 7., and Bellarm. De Verb. Dei, lib. iv. c. 8.

² See ch. 5. pp. 305 et seq. above.

Of all arguments, then, against the view for which we contend, this surely is one of the worst.

And what says our opponents' witness, Bishop Stillingfleet, to it? His Romish antagonist had urged, "that our rule of faith is common to all the heresies in the world, which pretend Scripture as well as we;" to which the bishop replies, "This is just the old sceptical argument against certainty; if there be any such thing as certainty, you must assign such a criterion which is not common to truth and falsehood; but if you cannot assign any such mark of truth which may not as well agree to what is false, then there is no such thing as certainty to be had. In matters of this nature the proof must not lie in generals, but we must come to particulars, to show the grounds of our certainty, viz. as to the Trinity and Incarnation of Christ; and then, if we cannot show why we believe those points, and reject the opposite heresies, as Arianism, Sabellianism, Eutychianism, &c., then we are to be blamed for want of certainty in the points, but not before."¹

Thirdly, it is objected that men are taught in Scripture to look to the pastors of the Church for instruction, and therefore that Scripture was not intended to be the sole authoritative rule of faith.

But, I ask, Is the Church to be heard in preference to God? If not, Scripture is our guide in all things there delivered; and he who believes that Scripture says one thing and the Church another, and follows the Church, is following man in preference to God. God has nowhere told us to go to the Church for the meaning of his own word. In the Scriptures he has spoken to us plainly, and the great duty of the minister of Christ is to bring before those who may be too ignorant or too careless to read, or too prejudiced to see, the truths which those Scriptures contain. "If any man speak," says the Apostle, "let him speak as the oracles of God."

But the ministerial duty of the pastor interferes not with the claim of the Holy Scriptures to be the alone supreme and divine rule of faith. We may give their full value to the instructions of the pastors of the Church, without supposing them to be any part of the rule of faith.

There are some observations on this matter in a treatise published by Dr. Clagett (the friend of Archbishop Sharp,) and another in the great Popish controversy in the time of James II., so judicious and pertinent to our present subject, that I shall here present the reader with an extract from them.

¹ Discourse concerning the nature and grounds of the certainty of faith, 1688, p. 50.

"Although it be not only *every man's* right but *duty* also to inquire into the truth, and it be impossible but that he must *judge for himself at last*, yet this does by no means void the authority of spiritual guides and governors to lead the people committed to their charge into the knowledge of the truth. For instance, as in a matter of so great concern as the true interpretation of Scripture, I am bound to use my own judgment as well as I can, so for the same reason I am bound to use all the helps I can procure, but especially to hearken to the governors of that Church whereof I am a member, which I may certainly do without being obliged to follow them, right or wrong, unless a man must of necessity put out his own eyes because he hopes that he has a good guide. That all confusion must needs follow the liberty of private inquiry and judgment, is a thing that no declamations will persuade me to believe, when I know the contrary by my own experience. I was baptized and educated in this Church of England to the profession of Christianity; the Church laid before me, as it does before all, her doctrine and worship, and has given me means and liberty to *examine all by the Scriptures*, and by common principles of religion. I have done this as well as I can, and am mightily confirmed in that faith and profession which I took up first upon her authority. Now I will not presume to say that the Church is obliged to me for taking this pains, but I must confess that I am not a little obliged to the Church for two things; both for instructing me in the sincere truth of religion, and for allowing me the liberty and the means to satisfy myself that she has done so; for whether she had taught me a doctrine that would bear examination, it had been impossible for me to know if I had not examined it. And I am so sure that I am not the less but the more fast in the communion of this Church, and in submission to her authority, for having used this liberty, that a man may harangue all day long about the mischiefs of this liberty, and when he has done, I shall need to do no more but to oppose my own experience to his flourishes; and it shall remain true, that a Church which teaches the truth sincerely, can do herself no greater right than to afford all manner of means and opportunities to her members to examine what she teaches. This, indeed, as well as other good things, may be abused, but they that do abuse it shall have the worst on it, but the Church is clear of all blame. And what our Lord said of Wisdom, will be true of the Church, that she shall be justified of her children. I do not deny that this liberty is very much for the disadvantage of a Church in one case, i. e. if she teaches errors instead of truths, and for doctrines the commandments of men; for when this comes once to be fully discovered, the discovery makes such a wound in her as cannot be

healed without a reformation, but otherwise she shall linger of it till she dies. And therefore this *liberty of private judgment and inquiring into the truth by the Scriptures*, lays a mighty obligation upon all Churches to be honest, I mean upon their spiritual guides; especially since whether they give this liberty or not it will be taken more or less; not all the terrors of the world, nor fraud joined to force, can totally suppress it. Upon the whole matter, I can neither see that the free use of the Scriptures must needs cause schisms, nor that the setting up of an infallible guide must needs prevent them. But I am abundantly convinced that God has left us no infallible judge to determine for us, and that he has left us *the Holy Scriptures to be the Rule of our faith*. I make not the least doubt that God, for infinitely wise and good reasons, has given us these means of coming to the knowledge of the truth, and not the other. I plainly discern this to be one, that the means of instruction and the evidence of truth which God has afforded us, might be a touchstone to distinguish between the sincere and the teachable, between the good and the honest heart on the one side, and the insincere and dishonest on the other. And sure I am that God has appointed a day of judgment, in which he will proceed according to that difference, and distinguish between these two, by rewarding the one and punishing the other The Holy Scriptures are *the only rule*, and will at last prove the only means of ending those controversies that disturb the peace of the Church."¹

We shall now proceed to show, in like manner, that Holy Scripture is the sole infallible Judge of controversies respecting the truths of revelation.

And here we shall pursue the same course as before in considering.

I. The true meaning and extent of what is here asserted.

II. The arguments and objections which may be advanced respecting it.

I. As to the true meaning and extent of the assertion that Holy Scripture is the sole infallible Judge of controversies respecting the truths of revelation.

By this position, then, we mean that it is in Holy Scripture only that we can meet with any infallible determinations respecting the points in dispute. When controversies arise, Scripture only can terminate them; and if Scripture does not terminate them, it is either because they concern things which are not there delivered, and which, therefore, do not come to us with the authority of

¹ On the authority of General Councils and the Rule of faith, by Dr. Chagott and Mr. Hutchinson, in *Bishop Gibson's Preserv.* Tit. iv. c. 2. pp. 166—73.

divine revelation, or because Scripture is misinterpreted; and in either case there is no further *infallible* authority *on earth* to appeal to for judgment.

When, however, we call Scripture a *judge*, we of course mean so far as any written document of the kind can be a judge; and this may be a sufficient answer to all the objections that the Romanists are accustomed to allege on this point; who, reckoning up all things that a *living* judge can do, and showing that some of those things Scripture cannot do, draw the conclusion that therefore Scripture cannot perform the office of a judge of controversies. But it does not follow that, because a written law cannot perform all that a living judge can do, that therefore such a law cannot be called, and be to a certain extent, a judge, and, if there be no other, the *sole* judge.

It is quite true that the pastors of every Church have a subordinate and ministerial authority to judge even in controversies of faith; but they do so, not as infallible teachers, but as fallible witnesses to what they deem to be the truth. Every Church is justified, and more than justified, in laying down a confession of faith which may separate her from unorthodox communions, and keep her own clear of vital error. But if she knows her duty, she does not do it in the presumptuous spirit of one who challenges infallibility, either from her own character, or as a witness of "tradition."

I see no reason, therefore, why we should not *with the Fathers* (as I shall hereafter show) give this appellation to Scripture; though, if it be made a question of words, we should be quite willing to substitute "standard of judgment," or any similar phrase that might be thought more appropriate to a written document; or to say with Chillingworth, that it is "the rule to judge controversies by; only protesting against anything else being lifted into the chair thus vacated."

We are here speaking, of course, of what exists upon earth; for otherwise, and speaking generally, Christ alone, as he is the Head of the Church, so is he the Supreme Judge of controversies in it: and indeed it is on this ground that we give to Scripture, as alone infallibly conveying to us his word, the place of supreme judge on earth; while we allow to the ministers of his Church the privilege of being subordinate and ministerial judges.

Let us consider,

II. The arguments and objections which may be advanced respecting this truth.

(1.) From Scripture.

The foundation upon which this truth rests is, as we have seen, briefly this; That as God is the only infallible Judge of controversies in religion, and as his voice can be recognized with cer-

tainty only in the Holy Scriptures, those Scriptures are consequently our only infallible Judge of controversies on earth.

What we have here to show, then, is, that they are referred to in Scripture as bearing that character, or as being of a nature suitable for that purpose.

Thus, then, are they referred to even in the Old Testament ; —“ When they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits . . . should not a people seek unto their God ?” And how are they to seek unto their God, to know his will in the matter ? By going “ to the law and to the testimony ” for direction and judgment, for this is the rule by which all other informants are to be tried ; and “ if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Is. xx. 19, 20.)

Our Lord himself not unfrequently appeals to them as performing the office of a judge. “ He that believeth not,” he says, “ is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John iii. 18.) How has God thus already condemned such ? By the sentence recorded in his Scriptures ; as the Apostle says, “ *The Scripture* hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” (Gal. iii. 22.) The Scripture is so formed as to act as a judge upon earth in such a case, and publish God’s sentence.

Again, he sends the Sadducees to the Scripture as determining the doctrine of the resurrection. “ As touching the dead, that they rise, have ye not *read* in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living : *ye therefore do greatly err.*” (Mark xii. 26, 27.) And in like manner he sends the Jews to the Scripture for judgment respecting himself, and his claims upon their belief. “ Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me.” (John v. 39.) And he tells them that the judgment given by the writings of Moses so clearly condemned them for their unbelief, that they might be said to accuse them before the Father. “ Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father ; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me ; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his *writings*, how shall ye believe my words ?” (John v. 45—7.) The judgment given in the *writings* of Moses, then, was sufficiently clear in favour of our Lord, in the judgment of God, to make the Jews guilty, if they did not so understand them ; and receive him, of whom they testified. There is no impossibility, then, that Scripture may be variously interpreted by men, and yet give in the sight of God an amply sufficient and

clear judgment, to bring those in guilty before him who do not interpret it aright. And the reason is plain ; because, in all important points, men are prevented only by their own prejudices, corruption, or carelessness, from rightly understanding it.

On another occasion he speaks, if possible, still more clearly of his own word, that word which is recorded in the Gospels, as bearing that character. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, *hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken*, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John xii. 48.) That word we possess in the Scriptures.

Shall we say, then, that the Scriptures containing that word are insufficient, and ill calculated to act as a judge now to us on earth, when we are told expressly that that word will be our judge at the future day of account ? Is it not equally calculated to act as a judge now to us on earth, as it will be at the future day of account at the bar of Christ ? And if by that word we are to be then judged, then the statements of that word are clear and determinate, and sufficient of themselves to determine all controversies on the *essentials* of the gospel at least ; and it will be our wisdom to use it now for the same purpose, and "judge ourselves" by it ; making that our rule of judgment here, by which we are to be judged hereafter. And if this is done with simplicity and sincerity, and prayer to God for his blessing, we know, from the promises of a faithful God, that such an inquirer shall not err fundamentally.

To these passages we might add those which speak of the efficacy and power of God's word in enlightening and influencing the mind, all tending to show the *suitableness* of Scripture to act in this character.

Thus the Apostle Paul speaks of the word of God as "effectually working in those that believe," (1 Thess. ii. 13,) and as "quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12.)

I proceed to notice,

(2.) The arguments and objections which may be derived from general considerations.

First, then, I argue thus :—God alone can infallibly determine controversies in religion, but men in general have no sufficient certainty of hearing his voice anywhere but in the Scriptures ; and therefore, the sole infallible judge of such controversies in the present state is Scripture. Taking into consideration only the system of the Tractators, it undeniably follows, that if "tradition" is not the word of God, and that God's word alone is infallible, (which, I suppose, will not be disputed) whatever cavil

may be urged against Scripture as unable to pronounce judgment so as to end controversy, it alone can act the part of an infallible judge in such matters. For all that we have to consider in finding such a judge is, first, where the supreme authority for pronouncing a decision rests, and then, how we are to obtain that decision; and if we are forced to allow that such authority is in God alone, and that we have no assurance of hearing his voice anywhere but in the Scriptures, it necessarily follows that Scripture only can give any infallible determination respecting the point in dispute. If there is no decision on the matter recorded there, there is no certainly-divine testimony concerning it, and if the matter is not plainly delivered there, it is not plainly revealed to us, and no man can be required to believe more than is there said respecting it.

Man may be the medium through whom a knowledge of the determinations of Scripture may be conveyed, *i. e.* he may deliver them to me from Scripture, and point out to me those passages upon which his views chiefly rest, and I may be brought to the belief of a doctrine upon that testimony; but the proof of the doctrine rests entirely upon the authority of Scripture, and not in the testimony of the bearer that such and such is the meaning of Scripture, from whatever source that interpretation may be derived.

Secondly,—That Scripture is the sole authoritative judge in controversies of faith that respect fundamental points, follows from the fact that there is no other judge whose orthodoxy can be assumed without proof, and consequently without our ascertaining, in the first instance, that for which we want a judge.

The catholic consent of the primitive church to which our opponents send us, is, as we have shown, a mere dream of the imagination. The faith of the catholic Church cannot be so adequately witnessed to us as to make any producible representation of it an infallible guide. Freedom from fundamental error could only be assumed of the catholic consent of the Church, either as the whole body of professing Christians, or as the body of true believers—"the blessed company of all faithful people." Taking the word "Church" in either of these senses, we may justly say, that the catholic consent of the Church would be (if we could ascertain it) an infallible guide. But in neither of these senses is it attainable.

And hence, it is absurd to talk of the Church, of any age, or any number of ages, being an infallible guide to the truth, even as a witness, because, taking the word Church in that sense in which alone infallibility could be predicated of it, its witness is unattainable, and so cannot be a guide *at all* to us.

Nay, even in the highest points, not only is catholic consent

incapable of proof, but the partial consent adduced is met by counter-statements, pleading an opposing witness of equal authority.

For instance, take the case of Arian, Nestorian, or Pelagian errors. Arius, as we have seen, appealed to antiquity as in his favour, and not only were there several dissentients to the decision come to at Nice, but not long after, at another Council, composed of nearly twice as many bishops, *the opposite doctrine was maintained*. Can we appeal, then, to the decision of the Nicene Council as infallible, as binding the conscience to belief, as authoritative? Augustine knew better than to do so. When disputing with Maximinus the Arian, what is his language? "But now," he says, [*i. e.* while arguing this question] "*neither ought I to bring forward the Nicene Council, nor you that of Ariminum, as if we could thus settle the question. Neither may I be held by the authority of the one, nor you by the authority of the other. We must argue the matter point with point, cause with cause, reason with reason, by AUTHORITIES OF SCRIPTURE, witnesses not belonging to any party, but common to both.*" Was not this, then, to make Scripture the Judge of the controversy?

Now this decision of the Council of Nice is, perhaps, the best entitled of any thing that has come down to us from the primitive Church to be considered as speaking the language of the catholic Church. If, then, this must be given up, as not *in itself* binding the conscience to belief, is there anything else that can be said to do so?

The case is precisely similar as it respects the Nestorian and Pelagian errors. Nestorius appealed to antiquity, and to this day his party form a large episcopal communion, claiming descent from the Apostles as much as any other. With respect to Pelagian errors, we have already seen that patristical testimony was appealed to as in their favour, and that the appeal was not destitute of foundation, to say the least.

We must take heed not to be deceived by names and words, nor to take it for granted that this or that body forms "the Church," from our having been accustomed to attach that title to it. The Apostolic admonition to every man is, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." It is easy to claim a high-sounding name, and then, on the strength of it, condemn others. But we must recollect that the name "Church" has been

1 Sed nunc nec ego Nicænum nec tu debes Ariminense tanquam præjudicaturus proferre concilium. Nec ego hujus auctoritate nec tu illius detineris; Scripturarum auctoritatibus, non quorumque propriis sed utrisque communibus testibus, res cum re, causa cum causa, ratio cum ratione concertet. Aug. contra Maximinum Arian. lib. ii. c. 14. § 3. Ed. Bened. tom. viii. col. 704.

claimed by all parties, and all have professed to be attached to and defenders of the doctrines of the Church of Christ, and almost all parties have more or less claimed patristical tradition as in their favour. When, then, we attach the name Church to this or that body, if we mean it to apply to one deserving of being followed as a *guide*, we must have some sufficient reason to give in proof of its being entitled to that name, and what *sufficient* reason can there be which does not include orthodoxy in the fundamentals of the faith, and orthodoxy that is not overlaid by the *addition* of fundamental errors?

All that we can obtain for any age, as the testimony of the Church, is the witness of a certain number of individuals or representative bodies, and this witness may, in some cases, be entitled to considerable respect, as doubtless it is in the case of the primitive Church; but in no case can be authoritative over the conscience. The orthodoxy of such witnesses must be proved before we can accept their testimony as authoritative, and then, their office of *judge* has been forestalled.

Do we, then, maintain that we cannot speak of the Universal Church having held or ordained this or that? nor that this is an argument in favour of what is so supported? By no means, taking the words in a general sense. But let us understand what meaning must be affixed to the words, and how far the argument is tenable. When we speak thus, we speak of that which *we* hold to be the Universal Church, and moreover, of decisions which can only, in a general and popular sense, be reckoned decisions of the Universal Church, for the proof of their being such is wholly lacking.

And in matters of discipline and non-essential points of faith, much is to be allowed to the authority, not merely of the Universal Church as far as it can be ascertained, but of any pure portion of it. The God of peace and order requires this of us. We are not to divide and throw into confusion a Scriptural Church for the indulgence of our own humours in such points. But in fundamental points the case is different. When arguing with an Arian, or abstractedly on the subject of Arian, or other fundamental errors, it is a mere deception to talk of the Universal Church being of a contrary mind. We must decide these points before we can know who constitute the Universal Church, that is, the *orthodox* Universal Church, which alone could be a guide.

Before we can admit a claim made for any individuals or any body of men, to be a summary Judge of controversies of faith, we must ascertain that they are orthodox in the faith, and therefore ascertain from an independent source, what the orthodox faith is; after which we need not their decision.

And still further, if we are looking for a *safe guide*, we must also ascertain that the fundamentals are not overlaid, as in the Church of Rome, with *fundamental error*, endangering the salvation of all who are in her communion; for, as Bishop Sander-son says, "The doctrinal errors of the Church of Rome do not directly and immediately overthrow the foundation of faith, as the heresy of the Arian Churches did, but *mediately* and by NECESSARY CONSEQUENCE they do, as in the points of merits, mass, transubstantiation," &c.¹ And so Archbishop Laud, "A church may hold the fundamental point literally, and as long as it stays there, be without control, and yet err *grossly, dangerously, nay damnably*, in the exposition of it. AND THIS IS THE CHURCH OF ROME'S CASE."² And therefore he tells us, "There's peril, great peril of damnable, both schism and heresy, and other sin, by living and dying in the Roman faith, tainted with so many superstitions, as at this day it is, and their tyranny to boot." "I do, indeed, for my part, leaving other men free to their own judgment, acknowledge a possibility of salvation in the Roman Church; but so as that which I grant to Romanists is not as they are Romanists, but as they are Christians, that is, as they believe the Creed, and hold the foundation, Christ himself, not as they associate themselves wittingly and knowingly to the gross superstitions of the Romish Church." "All Protestants unanimously agree in this, *that there is great peril of damnation for any man to live and die in the Roman persuasion*; and you are not able to produce any one Protestant that ever said the contrary. And therefore, that is a most notorious slander, where you say, that they which affirm this peril of damnation are contradicted by their own more learned brethren."³ Such is the church of which our opponents say, "*We are at peace with Rome*,"⁴ and call this sentiment *Anglicanism*.

Where, then, I ask, amidst all this diversity of sentiment, this clashing of Fathers and Councils and rival "Churches," where is there any secure resting-place for the sole of the foot but in the ark of God's written word, which, amidst the angry waves of controversy, floats calm and uninjured above all, bearing over them, in perfect safety, all those who have, *in reliance upon the divine promises, humbly* taken refuge in it, and as the waters of confusion swell around it, is only exalted by them to a higher elevation, and more distinctly pointed out as the only place of safety and peace.

Thirdly,—The claims of Scripture to be the sole infallible Judge of controversies of faith, are strongly supported by the

¹ Disc. concerning the Church, 1688, p. 17.

² Answer to Fisher, § 37, No. 5.

³ Ib. § 35, No. 6.

⁴ Mr. Newm. p. 253.

fact, allowed by all, that the *words* of Scripture only are inspired.

This concession (which cannot be withheld) is most important. For in the delivery of doctrines, especially those of a more mysterious nature, accuracy in the expressions used is essential to the conveying accurate ideas to the mind of the reader. And when any one who has himself only a certain portion of light with respect to them, attempts to convey a notion of them to others, even though he may have been correctly instructed in them, he is continually liable to be using expressions open to misconstruction and capable of an unorthodox sense. It is more than probable that he may have in his eye some error opposed to the truth which he is delivering, and to avoid the error he uses language open to error of an opposite kind. This is a defect which we continually meet with in the Fathers, and in the points which were the chief objects of dispute in the early Church, viz., those connected with the person of Christ. The consequence is, that it is impossible to prove their consent in them, even where they may have consented. In the doctrines of religion, therefore, we want the expressions dictated by the Divine mind, because in them only we have a representation of those doctrines which we can be sure is free from error, and which needs only a strictly *fair* interpretation to lead us to a knowledge of the truth. Hence St. Paul reminds us, that when the Apostles delivered the mysteries of God, they spoke "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." (1 Cor. ii. 13.) These expressions we can find in Scripture only. It is not pretended that patristical tradition can furnish us with the expressions of the oral teaching of the Apostles. And hence Scripture has peculiar claims on this ground to be considered the final and sole infallible Judge of controversies of faith.

But our opponents have various objections to urge on this head.

First,—The Scripture cannot be the sole judge of controversies, because it does not carry with it its own interpretation; which, in other words, is saying that, even in the fundamental points of faith, it is not intelligible.

"The Bible," says Mr. Newman, "is not so written as to force its meaning upon the reader;" and therefore the notion of "the Bible without note or comment being the sole authoritative judge in controversies of faith, is a self-destructive principle." (Lect. pp. 34, 5.) "They must either give up their maxim about the Bible and the Bible only, or they must give up the Nicene formulary. The Bible does not carry with it its own interpretation." (Ib. p. 292.) "That Scripture," says Bellarmine, "is not the judge, is

evident; because it admits different meanings, and cannot tell us which is the right one." (Bellarm. De V. D. iii. c. 9.)

Now here Mr. Newman has almost saved me the trouble of making any reply, for he has supplied something very like one himself; for, as he justly remarks elsewhere,—“It surely may be maintained, not only that the Scriptures have but one direct and unchangeable sense, but that it is *such* as in all greater matters to make a *forcible appeal* to the mind, when fairly put before it, and to *impress it with a conviction of its being the true one*.” (p. 165.) Truly so; and I think it might be considered a sufficient answer to the objection; for though there is the saving clause “when fairly put before the mind,” yet surely this “forcible appeal” and “impression conveying conviction,” can only be supposed in the case of Scripture distinctly and clearly pointing out its own sense; for if I say that such a book teaches this or that doctrine, and when the book is perused its teaching is so in favour of that doctrine, as to make a “forcible appeal to the mind” of men, “and impress it with a conviction” of its being there taught, that doctrine must be clearly pointed out there; and consequently, in the case of any man of sufficient education to know the meaning of its words, there can be no need of any authoritative interpreter, or of my insisting upon being heard first, lest he should attach a different meaning to them.

But further; upon what is this objection grounded? It stands upon the tacit supposition that the fundamental doctrines of the faith are so doubtfully stated in Scripture, that men may *with reason* attach different meanings to the statements there made respecting them. Now, this, we maintain, is utterly at variance with the objects which the Evangelists had in view in penning the gospels, and therefore contradicted by the fact of their being the subjects of divine inspiration for the purpose of enabling them to communicate the faith clearly and faithfully to mankind. The diversity of sentiment prevailing among men on points of faith, as it respects the fundamentals, arises, we contend, not from the language of Scripture being dubious,—for in all such points (as the Fathers witness) it is clear and plain—but from the preconceived notions and prejudices of men, who come not to the Scriptures with humility and simplicity of mind, seeking the truth in sincerity. These truths are stated in Scripture, so as to convince all who are willing to receive them; and such only are in a condition to receive them, from whatever quarter they may be proposed to them. They are placed before men, as our Lord’s teaching and miracles were before the Jews. There is sufficient evidence for the conviction of all who are open to the reception of the truth. The word of God makes a “*forcible appeal*” to the conscience in behalf of the truth. And this is all the *force*

which comes from a Divine source. And the truth having thus been clearly placed before men, they are responsible to God for their conduct with respect to it. Nor does their rejection of it, and misinterpretation of the Scriptures to meet their own views, any more prove that the Scriptures are insufficient to convey the truth to the minds of impartial men, than the rejection of our Lord by the Jews, and the different opinions entertained respecting him, prove that he gave insufficient evidence of the truth of his divine mission.

And when Mr. Newman says that "we must give up our maxim about the Bible and the Bible only, or we must give up the Nicene formulary," he, in fact, says that the Bible does not speak the language of the Nicene formulary so as to give any *proof* of its truth; which leaves to that formulary nothing but an uncertain tradition to rest upon, and thereby overthrows the only sure foundation upon which the orthodox faith is founded.

And still further, they who will persist in perverting Scripture to speak their own views, will as readily make antiquity speak them too, *when it is worth their while to do so*. And of this we have, as has been already observed, divers pregnant instances.

Let us hear our opponents' witness, Bishop Stillingfleet. "They [i. e. the Romanists] grant," he says, "that there is a great difference in the points contained in Scripture, of which some are allowed to be simply necessary to salvation, as those which are required to baptism; and Bellarmine yields, 'That all these points are certainly contained in Scripture, and were the things which the Apostles constantly preached to all people;' who cannot be denied to have been capable of understanding these things, when they heard them preached; and *how could they lose the capacity of understanding them, when they were written?* And if they might still understand them, then the Scripture bath no such mysterious knots; but all points necessary to salvation may be understood by the people. *So that as to these points of greatest importance, the Scripture must be left as a legacy to all Christians, and not only to the guides of the Church.* But J. S. craves leave to explain himself; and it is great pity to deny it him. 'Mistake me not,' saith he, 'I do not mean Scripture's letter is not clear in such passages as concern morality . . . but in dogmatical points or tenets which are spiritual and oftentimes profound mysteries, as a Trinity, Christ's Godhead, the real presence of his body in the sacrament, and such like, and in such as these, our rule is not intelligible enough to keep the followers of it from erring.' [Precisely the argument of our opponents.] I answer, Either the Apostles preached these points to all persons as necessary to their salvation, or they did not. If not, how come they to be necessary to be believed now?

If they did, then the people were capable of understanding them when they heard them; and *therefore may as well understand them when they read them*. [Manifestly taking it for granted that they are as fully and clearly delivered in the Scriptures, as in the oral preaching of the Apostles.] I do not mean the manner as to the Trinity and Incarnation, (as to Transubstantiation, I know nothing in Scripture about it, either as to thing or manner,) but the revelation of such a doctrine. So that if these points be owned to be necessary to salvation, they must be so plain, that men may understand their duty to believe them. For that is the bound I keep myself within, that all things necessary to salvation are so plain, that we may be certain of our duty to believe them; but if not, we may err without prejudice to our salvation."¹

Secondly, it is objected that Scripture cannot be the sole authoritative Judge of controversies, because in all the principal controversies of faith, the meaning of Scripture is the great point in controversy, and both sides claim Scripture as in their favour; and thus no controversy can be decided.

"The Bible," says Mr. Newman, "is not so written as to force its meaning upon the reader; no two Protestant sects can agree together whose *interpretation of the Bible* is to be received." "Accordingly" "the notion of the Bible, without note or comment, being the sole authoritative judge in controversies of faith, is a self-destructive principle." (pp. 34, 5.) And so among Bellarmine's reasons why Scripture cannot be the judge, is this, that "the question is concerning the interpretation of Scripture, and it cannot interpret itself." (De Verb. Dei. lib. iii. c. 9.)

But this objection proves nothing more than that there are persons who misinterpret Scripture. It is no proof that it is not a very sufficient judge of such controversies; and still less any proof that it is not the *sole* infallible judge that God has given us. Nay, when we consider how many feelings there are in the natural mind, tending to alienate it from the love of the truth as revealed in the gospel, and how many impediments there are to a reception of it, can it be a matter of surprise to us that a revelation, the true meaning of which has so much opposition to contend with, should be variously interpreted? its mysteries explained away, and its truths lowered to the standard of men's corrupt imagination? And is it to be argued, that because of this, that is, because men cannot be brought to see and confess the truths there revealed, the revelation is insufficient to show men the truth? The question is not whether men interpret the

¹ Disc. concerning nature and grounds of certainty of faith, pp. 81—83.

Bible variously, but whether, that being the case, the fault is not in man, and not in the Bible being fairly open to different interpretations in the essentials of the faith.

Mark the consequence of such reasoning as our opponents here adopt. It follows from it, that on none of all the various points that heretics have ever controverted, is Scripture clear enough to decide the dispute. For instance, Scripture tells us that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" from which impartial men would, we suppose, be ready to think that the Scripture plainly declared thereby, at least as much as *this*, that Christ appeared in human nature. But no, we must not draw any such conclusion; for the Valentinians and others did not receive this truth, and gave another interpretation to such Scriptures; and therefore we must not appeal to Scripture as determining this point. And so we might run through almost every truth in the Christian system; and because it has been denied by some who have professed to receive the Scriptures, say that the Scriptures do not distinctly determine the matter.

Thus again, for instance, Scripture says that "The Word was God," &c. The Catholics, therefore, conclude from this passage, that Christ must be, in some sense *at least*, God. But the Socinians explain such texts so as to comport with a denial of the divinity of the Son in any sense. Hence, say our opponents, we can draw no certain conclusions from such texts. That is, if a man chooses to assert that two and two make five, we must obtain some infallible mathematician to decide between us, before it can be determined satisfactorily that two and two make four. And mark the triumphant reply of the Socinian: He will say, You grant, then, that the Scriptures may *not unreasonably or absurdly* be considered to have the meaning which I have attributed to them. I am content, therefore; for I leave tradition to those who like it, and abide by what I have good reason to believe to be the word of God. Give me the Bible, and I will willingly give you tradition.

Nay, further, as we have so often had occasion to observe, if we go to tradition, so do others. The Arians, the Nestorians were loud in their appeal to tradition; and some of the orthodox have admitted that their appeal was not without reason.

"In the Samosatenian, Arian, Pelagian, Nestorian, and Eutychian controversies," says Bishop Stillingfleet, "neither of the parties disowned Scripture or tradition; and those who were justly condemned, pretended still to adhere to both. And if such flames could not be prevented so much nearer the Apostles' times by the help of tradition, what reason can there be to expect it so long after?"¹

¹ Stillingfleet's Discourse on nature and grounds of the certainty of faith, p. 111.

Mr. Newman himself allows that the judgment of the Fathers may be most easily evaded or perverted, if there be the inclination to do so; being forced thereto by the use made of the Fathers by the Romanists. "Romanists," he says, "are obliged by their professions to appeal to antiquity, and they therefore do so. But enough has been said already to suggest, that where men are indisposed towards such an appeal, where they determine to be captious, and take exceptions, and act the disputant and sophist rather than the earnest inquirer, *it admits of easy evasion, and may be made to conclude anything or nothing.*" (Lec. p. 68.) In other words, where men are so inclined, the Fathers may be alleged in support of opposite views as well as the Scriptures. How is it, then, that they are able to end controversies any more than the Scriptures? The Nicene Creed itself has received an unorthodox interpretation.¹ The fact is, that to attempt to bind heresy by words, is as useless as to try to bind it with chains.

The Romanists, seeing all this, urge the necessity of some infallible judge being ever present with the Church to decide what Scripture and "tradition" do really deliver; and upon the principle of our opponents, that nothing is clear, nor can be a rule of faith or judge of controversies, about the meaning of which men disagree, there is no doubt wanting some court of appeal of that kind. And our opponents, though they would hardly admit that they have embraced this doctrine, yet often practically come very near it. I say often, because their language, and especially that of Mr. Newman, is so contradictory, and assumes such opposite forms, as to be perfectly Protean. But to avoid the necessity of a direct assertion of the infallibility of the present Church in delivering tradition, they ingeniously try to get over the difficulty by declaring that "tradition" is perfectly clear and indisputable, "a fact obvious to the intelligence of inquirers," when the only fact certain is, that people are all at variance about it.

Most justly, however, has an able Roman Catholic writer, quoted in a former page,² observed, when defending the position, that "*some controversies of religion may be decided by the Holy Scripture alone,*" (instancing, among others, that "against the Socinians, that Christ had a being before he was conceived of the Blessed Virgin.")—"If controversies were not decided but only when they are ended, few would be decided by the Scripture alone. For it seldom happens that clamours and debates

¹ See Dupin (Dublin ed.) vol. i. p. 655. col. 2. sub. fin., and the works of Whiston.

² Dr. Hawardine. See pp. 92, 2, above.

are silenced by being condemned. Much less can this be expected from the word of God alone. For whilst men have their passions about them, they will either pronounce the Scripture itself apocryphal, or put it upon the rack that it may not bring them in guilty. *A dispute is decided when the case is fairly and peremptorily judged by due authority.* But it ends not commonly till *the disputants please.* And it seldom or never comes to this till those that are in the wrong be either *divested of their passions or directed by fear.*" [Which is true enough, and so the Romanists take the *latter* course for ending controversies.] "The Socinians, (if sincere,) without seeing their error, give a forced interpretation to all the texts of Scripture which prove the immortality of human souls, and that the Word had a being before it was made flesh. But in rigour, a controversy is then *decided* when nothing but a strong prejudice can hinder a man from seeing that it is really determined. *For a trifling reply is no reply at all.*" To which he adds,— "Hence Dr. Stillingfleet's exceptions against all Scripture proofs, for the unerring authority of the Catholic Church in necessities, are no demonstration that this point is not *decided* by the Scripture."¹

The last paragraph will, perhaps, explain how it happened that he came to make remarks so adapted for the confutation of one of the favourite arguments of his own party; but they are perfectly just, and doubly forcible from the mouth of a Romanist.

And we find here a very sufficient reply to the whole of R. H.'s elaborate ironical "Plea of the Socinian," in his "Guide in Controversies;" for the whole of it amounts to this, that upon the Protestant principles the Socinian will always have something to say for himself; he will aver that he has read the Scriptures, and they appear to him to favour his view, &c. &c., and that the Romish mode of settling the dispute will alone silence him. I answer, What then? Our object is not to *silence* but to *convince*; and does it show that the controversy is not decided, because the Socinian declares that he is not convinced? And I notice this the rather, because our opponents often use the same argument.

That the Scripture, therefore, cannot be expected to *end* controversies, that is, to put a stop to them, is most true; nor will anything else of the kind, as the declaration of the Apostle, "There must be heresies," (1 Cor. xi. 19,) may teach us. There is but one way of *ending* controversies, and that it is to be hoped will evermore be left in the hands of Rome. To end them by persuading all men of the truth, is a work which One only can perform, even that omnipotent Spirit who alone can give the

¹ The rule of faith truly stated, 1731. 12mo. Pt. iii. pp. 290—295.

spiritual discernment necessary to enable men rightly to discern spiritual things. (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

Still further; we find that the very hearers themselves of our Lord and his Apostles, who possessed the reality of this tradition to which we are referred in all its fulness and purity, propagated divers errors as part of the Christian faith. If, then, a reference to the Bible in support of error proves that the Bible does not plainly state the truth, it follows, by the same reasoning, from the above fact, that the truth was never plainly delivered at all; for the argument is, that when truth is plainly delivered, every man who hears must receive and embrace it, and cannot, through prejudice or any other cause, distort what is delivered to a different meaning than the one intended; which is just the old Romish argument, that "men never question things that are evident;" to which Bishop Stillingfleet very justly replies, that "there may be *sufficient evidence* where all men are not persuaded by it."

Nay, more; this very objection appears to me to support the view for which we contend. For the fact that Christians are so divided as to the meaning of the Scriptures, while they all agree as to the inspiration of the Scriptures, seems at once to point out the Scriptures as the sole infallible guide. For they who are so divided in opinion among themselves cannot be our guide; and if we are compelled to make a selection from among them, how can we do it but by the guidance of the inspired volume? There is no note, *independent of doctrine*, by which we can ascertain who are the genuine followers of Christ. With one of our opponents' own most learned witnesses (Bishop Morton), then, we say, that this is precisely the reason why we must have recourse to the Scriptures; "we cast our eye unto Scripture the polestar, *especially in so tempestuous a night of opposite contentions.*"

The Holy Scriptures have evidences sufficient to convince the reason of every man that they come from God. Moreover, all the different sects of Christians agree in this. They disagree as to the meaning of the Scriptures, and as to the oral teaching of the Apostles, but they agree in referring to the Scriptures as the word of God. Here, then, we are on sure ground; and every man, conscious that he will have to answer before God as an individual, has to inquire what the Scriptures reveal to him as the way of salvation.

Even in civil matters we are bound to a certain extent to exercise our private judgment as to what is the law of the land.

¹ Labyrinth. Cantuar. p. 51.

² Rational Account, &c. p. 105.

³ Cath. Appeal, ii. 7. § 10 pp. 175, 176.

Suppose, for instance, a case of disputed succession or such-like in which the Acts of Parliament relating to the question received from the judges and men learned in the law different interpretations. Whatever our qualifications for judging of their meaning might be, we should be driven to the *necessity* of exercising our private judgment upon the meaning of those Acts, unless we chose to be driven like sheep by one party or another, because they declared that they were the most numerous, or chose to assert they were infallible. Now this is a very similar case to that before us. Our opponents tell us that we must go to a certain body among professing Christians to tell us what is the meaning of the word of God, and receive their interpretation as infallible, because that word is interpreted in various ways. It appears to us that this is the very reason why we should *not* take the interpretation of any set of men as *infallible*, but are of necessity compelled, as reasonable creatures responsible to God, to exercise our private judgment in the matter.

The very objection, then, made against the Scripture as our rule and judge, because men differ in their interpretation of it, is the best argument that can be adduced in favour of its being so.

Let us again hear our opponents' witness, Bishop Stillingfleet, on this point. "If Christ be the eternal Son of God in opposition to heathen deities, and we can know him by Scripture to be so, then we may as well know him to be the eternal Son of God in opposition to Arians and Socinians. If against the heathens we can prove from Scripture that the Word was made flesh, why will not this as well hold against Nestorians and Eutychians? *And so the Scripture becomes a very sufficient Rule to distinguish light and darkness in such points among Christians too.* For is it ever the less fit to be a rule because both parties own it? 'But they differ about the sense of it, and therefore controversies can never be ended by it.' If Church-history deceive us not, the greatest controversies were ended by it before General Councils were heard of, and more than have been since. Many of those we read of in the first ages were quite laid asleep, as Theodoret observes (Hæret. Fab. 1. 2. 3.); but since Church authority interposed in the most reasonable manner, some differences have been perpetuated, as appears by the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies. I do not blame the authority of Councils, *proceeding as they then did by the Rule of Scriptures*, but the event showed that the most probable means are sometimes very ineffectual for *ending controversies*. . . . It is possible to stop men's mouths by force and power, but nothing brings men to a true satisfaction but inward conviction as to the true sense of Scripture, and there can be no rational certainty as to these points without it. If controversies be not ended, let us not

blame the wisdom of Providence, for God does not always appoint the means most effectual in our judgment, but such as are most suitable to his own design. And we see reason enough to blame the folly and weakness, the prejudice and partiality, the wilfulness and obstinacy of mankind, and till human nature be brought to a better temper, we may despair of seeing any end to controversies. . . . He saith, 'Scripture is not our distinguishing rule of faith, but our own particular judgments about Scripture ; for that which distinguishes my rule from that of the most abominable heresies, can only be my own judgment upon the letter of Scripture, and wriggle which way I will, there it will and must end at last.' I wish Mr. S. had been a little better conversant in the old disputes about certainty, for it would have saved me the trouble of answering some impertinent objections, such as this before us. For they would have been thought mean logicians who could not put a difference between the *rule of judgment* and the *judgment* which a man made according to the rule. Suppose the question were about sense, whether that were a certain rule or not to judge by ; and Epicurus should affirm it, and say he so firmly believed it that he judged the Sun to be no bigger than he seemed to his senses ; would not he have been thought ridiculous who should have said this fancy of Epicurus was his rule ? The rule he went by was in itself certain, but he made a wrong judgment upon it ; but that was not his rule. So it is here. *We declare the Scripture to be our only certain and standing rule whereby we are to judge in matters of faith ;* and we understand it as well as we can, and form our judgments by it ; but doth it hence follow that our judgment is our rule ? . . . He objects, 'That our people do not make Scripture the rule of their faith, not one in a million relying upon it.' . . . Have they, then, any other rule of faith which they rely upon ? What is it, I pray ? Is it the Church's infallibility ? No. Is it Pius the Fourth's creed ? No, truly ; 'while they are children they believe tradition.' Now, I think, J. S. hath hit it. *Tradition is, indeed, a rule of faith for children, who are very apt simply to believe their fathers and teachers.* But suppose they come to years of discretion, what rule of faith have they then ? Have they a judgment of discretion then ? . . . Whatever he insinuates as to our people, I have reason to believe *far better of them ; and that all those who mind their salvation do seriously read and consider the Holy Scriptures as the rule of their faith.* But if in matters of opinion or in doubtful or obscure places they make use of the skill and assistance of their teachers, wherein are they to blame ? *The Scripture is still their rule ;* but the help of their teachers is for the better understanding it. And cannot

our logician distinguish between the *rule of faith* and the *helps to understand it*? Suppose, now, a mother or a nurse should quit 'honest tradition,' as J. S. here calls it, and be so ill inclined as to teach children to spell and read in the New Testament, and by that means they come by degrees to understand the doctrine which Christ preached, and the miracles which he wrought, and from thence to believe in Christ and to obey his commands, I desire to know into what these persons do resolve their faith. Is it indeed into those who taught them to read, or into the New Testament as the ground of their faith, *when they have been all along told that THE SCRIPTURE ALONE IS THE WORD OF GOD, and whatever they are to believe, it is because it is contained therein*? And so by whatever means they come to understand the Scripture, it is *that alone they take for the rule and foundation of their faith. . . . We never require them to trust wholly to our judgments, but we give them our best assistance, and call in the old interpreters of the Church, and we DESIRE THEM TO USE THEIR OWN REASON AND JUDGMENT WITH DIVINE ASSISTANCE for settling their minds. . . .* 'But suppose,' saith Mr. S., 'that one of my own flock should tell me that I have erred in interpreting Scripture, he desires to know what I would say to him.' This is a very easy question, and soon answered. I would endeavour to convince him as well as I could. 'And is that all?' And what would J. S. do more? Would he tell him he was infallible? I think not; but *only as 'honest tradition' makes him so, and how far that goes towards it I shall examine afterwards.* Well; but suppose 'John Biddle, against the Minister of his parish and the whole Church of England to boot, understand Scripture to be plainly against a Trinity and Christ's divinity. And it is but fair for me to suppose him maintaining his heresy against J. S., and let any one judge whether of us be more likely to convince him. He owns the Scripture, and confesses if we can prove our doctrine from thence, he will yield; but he laughs at oral tradition, and thinks it a jest for any one to prove such a doctrine by it. And truly, if it were not for the proofs from Scripture, I do much question whether any argument from mere tradition could ever confute such a one as John Biddle. But when we offer such proofs as are acknowledged to be sufficient in themselves, we take the only proper way to give him reasonable satisfaction. 'Suppose he will not be convinced?' Who can help that? Christ himself met with wilful and obstinate unbelievers. And was this any disparagement to his doctrine? God himself hath never promised to cure those who shut their eyes against the light. . . . I had said many years ago, 'That the Scriptures being owned as containing in them the whole will of God so plainly revealed that no sober inquirer

can miss of what is necessary for salvation, there can be no necessity supposed of an infallible society of men, either to attest or explain these writings among Christians, any more than there was for some ages before Christ, of such a body of men among the Jews to attest or explain to them the writings of Moses and the Prophets.' And where lies the heresy or danger of this doctrine? If I said that no sober inquirer can miss of things necessary to salvation in Scripture, it is no more than St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, Aquinas, and other schoolmen had said before me.

. . . . I shall now sum up my answer in these particulars. I. Every Christian as such is bound to inquire after the true way to salvation, and hath a capacity of judging concerning it. II. Every Christian, proceeding according to the best rules of judging, hath reason to receive the Scripture as the Rule of his faith. III. *The Scripture is so plain in all necessities, and God hath promised such assistance to them that sincerely seek it, that none who do so shall want the knowledge of such things as are necessary to their salvation.* IV. *When anything is offered as necessary to be believed in order to salvation, every Christian hath a right and liberty of judging whether it can be proved by the Scripture to be so necessary or not.* V. We do not allow to particular persons the same faculty of judging in doubtful points of controversy which we do as to matters that immediately concern their salvation. VI. *No pretence of infallibility or authority can take away that right of judging which was allowed them by the Apostles whose authority was infallible.* VII. This right of judging doth not exclude the Church's due authority as to matters of faith and controversies of religion (as it is declared Art. 20 of our Church); but all that we now plead for is not any authority as to others, but a right of judging as to themselves in matters that concern their salvation. VIII.

THE CERTAINTY OF FAITH AS TO THEM DEPENDS UPON TWO THINGS; 1. THE CLEARNESS OF SCRIPTURE ABOUT THEM WHICH IMPLIES THE CERTAINTY OF REASON. 2. THE PROMISE OF DIVINE ASSISTANCE WHICH MAKES THEIR FAITH DIVINE, BOTH AS TO ITS PRINCIPLE, ITS GROUND, AND ITS EFFECT. *The most certain way we now have to know what doctrine the Apostles taught is by their writings, since they taught and wrote the same doctrine, and we are certain we have the doctrine they wrote; but we have NO OTHER WAY TO BE CERTAIN WHAT DOCTRINE THEY TAUGHT The Scripture being our sole and ENTIRE rule of faith, all matters necessary to salvation must be supposed to be contained therein. The point, then, between us is, whether the Scripture were left only to the Church to interpret it to the people in all points, or whether it were intended for the general good of the whole Church, so as THEREBY TO DI-*

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RECT THEMSELVES in their way to Heaven, and, consequently, whether it may not be opened and understood by all persons in matters that are necessary to their salvation. . . . They cannot deny that the Scripture was designed to be a certain and infallible rule of faith TO ALL. . . . If a rule be in itself certain, and be certainly received for a rule, that is surely enough to make it a rule to a man; but it is not necessary to the being of a rule that a man can never deviate from it by his own fault.—For there is no intellectual rule can be assigned, but it is possible for a free agent to deviate from, although he do at the same time profess it to be his rule. Do not all Christians agree the commands of Christ to be an infallible rule of life? And J. S., by his admirable logic, will either prove this not to be a rule, or that it is impossible for men to sin. . . . Persons may own the Scripture to be a most certain and infallible rule as to truth and falsehood, and they are sure, while they effectually regulate themselves by it, they can never err; but while they profess to do it they may. So that all Mr. S.'s subtlety vanishes into nothing by so plain and easy a distinction. Therefore, I am still of the mind that A RULE OF FAITH IS THAT WHEREBY WE ARE TO JUDGE WHAT WE ARE BOUND TO BELIEVE AS TO DIVINE REVELATIONS."¹

Thirdly, It is objected that from the variety of opinions maintained as to the meaning of Scripture, it follows that if Scripture is the sole infallible judge, having authority over the consciences of men, the Church would be thrown into confusion and disorder.*

Here, again, the objection does not *reach* the question; it shows, at most, only the inconveniences that might result from Scripture being the sole judge.

But further, we deny that such inconveniences do result from it. The objection rests upon the tacit supposition that the Church cannot justly excommunicate those who deny the fundamentals of the faith, or maintain fundamental errors, unless it possess in one way or another some infallible and authoritative judge besides the Scripture to determine with authority the meaning of Scripture. This sentiment is in terms avowed by Mr. Newman; yes, and even professedly deduced from an article of our Church, which, as his own favourite witness Leslie has already informed him, means nothing of the kind. "In the 20th article," he says, "we are told that the Church has 'authority in controversies of faith.' . . . But how can she have this authority, unless she be *certainly true* in her declarations? . . . To say the Church has

¹ Disc. conc. nature and grounds of certainty of faith. pp. 51—80.

² See Mr. Newm. Lect. I. p. 34, &c.; and Bellarm. De V. D. iii. 9.

authority, and yet is not true [i. e. *certainly* or *infallibly* true,] as far as it has authority, were to destroy liberty of conscience; which Protestantism, in all its forms, holds especially sacred; it were to substitute something besides truth as THE SOVEREIGN LORD OF CONSCIENCE, which would be tyranny. If this Protestant principle is not surrendered in the article, which no one supposes it to be, the Church is, to a certain point, there set forth as *the organ or representative of truth*; and its teaching is *identified* with it." (pp. 226, 7.) So that the *Protestant* principle of *private judgment* assumes that "the Church" is "certainly true" in her declarations; and therefore, as "the organ of truth," is "THE SOVEREIGN LORD OF CONSCIENCE;" and "the Church" must be infallible in her declarations, because otherwise she would have no right to be (as it is here assumed she is) "the sovereign lord of conscience."

Now did it never strike Mr. Newman, that the pastors of the Church may have a *ministerial* authority over men, though they do not thrust themselves into the throne of God, as "*the sovereign lord of conscience*;" and that, by that ministerial authority, the Church may be preserved pure, and heretics and offenders cut off from its communion, quite as well as if they claimed higher authority, and boasted of themselves as being an infallible guide?

And this ministerial authority is possessed, not only by the pastors of the universal Church, but by those of each distinct portion of it. They to whom the government of any Church is entrusted, are bound to preserve it from the infection of fundamental error, by the administration of discipline; to cut off obstinate heretics from its communion; and, above all things, not to permit those who hold what it deems to be fundamental errors to minister in it. Hence our Lord says to the Church of Thyatira, "I have a few things against thee; because thou *sufferest* that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to *teach* and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." (Rev. ii. 20.)

But for this there is no need, either that it should be infallible, or that it should possess in patristical tradition an infallible guide. It acts as an assembly of fallible beings, responsible to God for the support and maintenance of his truth, as far as the moral influence of its verdict can extend; and responsible also for that verdict being such as is authorized by the revelation God has given us. Every faithful Church is a witness for God, and can bear witness as well and as successfully to the truth, by a plain and modest assertion of it, as by any presumptuous claim to infallibility. But it must be remembered that *every individual* is also responsible to God for what he believes; and that God has not

left him altogether to the teaching of man, but has given him certain inspired writings containing a revelation of the truth ; and that while men are at variance respecting the meaning of those writings, they all agree that those writings are inspired, and contain that doctrine according to which he is to be judged by Christ hereafter.

Our opponents argue as if Scripture was addressed merely to the pastors of the Church to tell them how they are to teach ; whereas it is addressed to mankind at large ; and is a universal gift, for the use of which all are accountable. Consequently, however right it may be for a man to use all the helps he can obtain for ascertaining the meaning of those Scriptures, he is responsible to God, as one who has possessed in them an infallible declaration of God's will, and therefore as one bound not to depart from their apparent meaning in vital points ; and to follow this or that body in such points only as far as they appear to him to follow the Scriptures. Men have not been left to the pastors of the Church to teach them the faith ; otherwise the case would be, in some respects, different. God has given them another guide, and one which all parties allow to be infallible, viz., the Scriptures ; and one, therefore, which they are responsible for using, in preference to everything which may be proposed to them through the medium of fallible men.

Nor is this exercise of the right of private judgment at all chargeable with presumption. On the contrary, it is a duty necessarily imposed upon us by our individual responsibility to God, and which every man must perform *to the best of his ability* ; and for such a performance of it, and such only, is he responsible. "To expound Scripture," says Dean Sherlock, "is to make us understand it, not to impose upon our faith without understanding ; and therefore this is not so much an act of authority, as of skill and judgment ; any man who can so explain Scripture to me as to make me understand it, shall gain my assent ; but *no authority is sufficient to make me assent without understanding*. And yet such a catholic expositor, our author would set up, whose *authority shall make me grant that to be the sense of Scripture, which his reasons and arguments cannot persuade me of*. But all reasonable creatures must understand for themselves ; and Christ nowhere commands us to believe that to be the sense of Scripture, which we cannot understand to be so. I know no necessity that all Christians should agree in the interpretation of all difficult texts of Scripture : there is enough in Scripture plain to carry men to heaven ; and as for more difficult and obscure texts, they are for the improvement of those who can understand them, and need no such catholic

expositor ; because it is not necessary that all men should understand them."¹

But such an exercise of the right of private judgment is, according to Mr. Newman, an assumption of *infallibility*. "The multitude of Protestants," he says, "consider every man his own judge ; they hold that every man may and must read Scripture for himself, and judge about its meaning, and make up his mind for himself ; nay is, as regards himself and practically, *an infallible judge of its meaning*—infallible certainly ; for, were the whole new creation against him, Bishops, Doctors, Martyrs, Saints, the Holy Church Universal, the very companions of the Apostles, the unanimous suffrage of the most distinct times and places, and the most gifted and holiest men, yet, according to the popular doctrine, though he was *aware* of this, he ought ultimately to rest in his own interpretations of Scripture, and to follow his private judgment, however sorry he might be to differ from such authorities." (pp. 319, 20.)

Now here are a vast number of very big words heaped up, but to very little purpose. Here are "the whole new creation," "the Holy Church Universal," "the unanimous suffrage of the most distinct times and places, and the most gifted and holiest men," all shaking their heads at us, and warning us that it is at our peril to attach any meaning to what God has said to us in the Scriptures, other than what they tell us is to be affixed to it. Such an apparition is, no doubt, very alarming ; and some people who are frightened by big words, begin to think that it really would be very presumptuous to differ from such authorities. *And so do I too.* But when we come to close quarters with these spectres, we find them vanish into thin air ; and "the whole new creation" leave nothing behind them to tell us what meaning they did affix to Scriptures, but the mutilated works of a few fallible authors of the primitive Church. The right of private judgment, then, involves no such presumption as Mr. Newman would here lead us to suppose. And however much men may misinterpret the Bible, they have in it at least an infallible guide ; and as long as they adhere closely to it, in the sincere desire to understand it, and with prayer to God to enable them to do so, will not be suffered by a faithful God to err fundamentally ; while, as it respects the Fathers, they are at every step almost liable to be led astray ; for they are met at the very threshold of their inquiry by a multitude of difficulties, all of which must be cleared up, before they can proceed satisfactorily. They must determine the meaning of doubtful passages ; they

¹ W. Sherlock's *Vindication of some Protestant Principles, &c.* Lond. 1688. 4to. p. 99.

must know how many Fathers are sufficient to constitute a safe guide; they must ascertain that these are not contradicted by others, and determine various other points in which they are exposed to innumerable errors, through inexperience and prejudice; while after all, at the best, they get nothing more than a fallible guide, which cannot relieve them from the duty of ascertaining for themselves what God has delivered in the Scriptures.

Moreover, the rights of the Church and the right of private judgment are by no means incompatible with each other; nor need any confusion or disorder arise in the Church from the doctrine for which we contend. It is necessary for the well-being of the Church to lay down what it holds to be the doctrines of Scripture as a protest against the misinterpretations of heretics, and to expand that confession of faith from time to time according as heresies arise, in order to keep her communion as far as possible pure. And this holds good of a particular Church as well as of the whole universal Church. And in both cases it is done on the responsibility of those who do it, and done not as if the determination was infallible, but as a protest against supposed error, and a safeguard to protect the communion of those who make it. The validity of their sentence against the supposed heretic depends upon whether they are right or not, and this God alone can infallibly decide; while nevertheless they must act as if they were right.

It is from taking this course, I conceive, that our Church has sometimes been most unjustly accused by her enemies as one that always disowned infallibility, but always acted as if she were infallible. Here, as it often happens in such cases, truth has been sacrificed for the sake of an antithesis, but if the word *right* had been inserted in the latter clause instead of infallible, the remark would have been perfectly true, and have imputed nothing blameworthy. For if men were not to act, and act with energy and vigour, according to what they believed to be true and right, because they were not infallible, they must cease to act at all. But there is a vast deal of difference between acting with energy, according to that which we believe to be right and true, and claiming infallibility. There is a limit to what we do in the first case, as the annals of our Church will testify. There is no limit in the other, as the annals of the Church of Rome will prove.

"As for that objection against our Church," says Dr. Clagget and Mr. Hutchinson, "which is of late so much insisted upon by some, that notwithstanding the liberty she gives to private Christians to examine her doctrines by the Scriptures, she yet peremptorily requires the profession of that faith which she teaches, and conformity to her rules of worship, there is nothing in it to

surprise any man but the intolerable vanity of the objections. For this is so far from being unreasonable, that for the same reason that she does the one she may and ought to do the other; that is, because she is certain that the conditions of her communion are justifiable to the whole world, therefore she should neither fear to insist upon them, nor to provoke all persons to the examination of them by any proper methods whatsoever. This objection, however, runs a little cross to the other, that the liberty our Church gives must needs cause disorder and confusion. For why there must needs be disorder where a Church's faith is fixed, and a form of worship established, and conformity required, and no just cause of offence given, I cannot understand, unless it be because it must needs be that some men will be very unreasonable, and others will be very wicked, after the best care is taken to direct them in their duty, and oblige them to it. If they of the Roman Church can tell how to prevent this infallibly, it is a secret which they have as yet kept to themselves. For our own parts, we are altogether ignorant of any way, that shall make it impossible for men that are endued with freewill to abuse it, whether by making wrong judgment or a wrong choice. Our Church hath fixed terms of communion which are truly catholic, and leaves every one to judge for himself whether they be so or not, affording to every one the liberty of using all means that they can in order to the making a right judgment, *and therefore of using the Scriptures*, which are not only the best in themselves, but which also *come within the compass of the abilities and leisure of all, more or less*. We are to use the liberty of judging for ourselves by these means, under this consideration, that we are to be accountable for it at the day of judgment This is the provision that God hath made for the maintaining of truth and peace in his Church; that governors cannot abuse their authority in commanding, nor the people their liberty of judging whether the command can be obeyed with a good conscience, but at the peril of their souls. . . . As for those that impute the disorders and schisms of the Church to *the liberty of judging by the Scriptures which we allow*, I would be glad to know what means they are provided with to ascertain the unity of communion."¹

When the pastors of any Church separate one who obstinately maintains what they deem to be fundamental error from their communion, they do so not as persons possessing any infallible guide besides the Scriptures, but in the exercise of the ministerial authority given to them by the Church, and each party is re-

¹ On the Authority of Councils and the Rule of Faith. In Bp. Gibson's Pre-serv. vol. i. tit. 4. c. 2. pp. 170, 171.

sponsible to the great Head of the Church alone for their conduct. There is no infallible tribunal on earth before which he can be arraigned, and therefore nothing can be justly done beyond such an act of separation. None have authority over his conscience.

The whole matter must be referred to Christ's tribunal at the day of judgment, and if the pastors of the Church have been in error, they will be the persons to suffer punishment, and not he who knowing from the Scriptures, what the real doctrines of the faith are, and seeing that those pastors were leading him astray, determined to obey God rather than man.

But with this ministerial authority, and the concession of the right of private judgment to individuals as to the meaning of God's word in points upon which their salvation depends, our opponents are altogether dissatisfied. No; they must either wield the sceptre of infallibility, or they can do nothing, and every thing must take its own course, and go to confusion.

The real fact is, that our opponents are carried away, like many Papists, by the notion that there must be some infallible guide to be found somewhere to "force" upon men the true meaning of the Scriptures, because otherwise they see clearly that professing Christians will always be divided as to its meaning, and that the true Church, whatever it may be, can no more claim to be considered an infallible witness than those who are supporters of error. If, then, this staggers any one, let me put it to him, whether this is at all dissonant with God's ordinary dealings with mankind. Here is a revelation given of the Christian faith in a fourfold account of our Lord's life and teaching. Here are above twenty Epistles written by inspired authors to various Churches, amplifying and explaining that revelation. Here are various Churches and individuals among Christians, holding forth in their public acts and confessions the light of truth, and bearing witness to the true meaning of Scripture and the orthodox faith. Is this sufficient or not for the conviction of men? Is not such a state of things precisely in accordance with the ordinary course of God's dealings with mankind?

But with this state of things the lovers of Church authority will not be satisfied. They must wield a power over the consciences of men to bind them to belief in what they deliver, otherwise they tell us there will be no end of controversies and heretical sects. Now is not this the very source of their errors, that they expect that there should be in this world an end of controversies and heretical sects? The Apostles had no such expectation. They tell us that there must be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest. (1 Cor. xi. 19.) We entertain, therefore, no such expectation; and, consequently, when

we are told that if the Bible is the sole authoritative judge of controversies in religion, there will be no end of controversies and heretical sects, for that the Bible cannot force people to believe the truth, we reply that this is perfectly true, but no reasonable ground of objection against the view for which we contend, for this is a trial which the Church of Christ ought to expect and look for, as the natural consequence of the present state of things. While human nature remains what it is, there will be dissensions among men on such points. But this does not bring confusion into any Church that is watchful in maintaining her orthodoxy, though it be a trial to which, as a Church militant, she is necessarily exposed. And though it would carry me too far from our present subject to enlarge upon the remark I am about to make, I would suggest to the reader the inquiry how far a claim to be considered an infallible guide would be likely to tend to the purity or the peace of any Church that made it.

Our opponents seem ready to think, that if "the Church," i. e. according to their use of the phrase, the collective body of the pastors of the Church, has not authority over the consciences of men, the ministerial office is useless; that if an ultimate appeal to the Scriptures lies open to all men, and men may judge for themselves from them what is the truth, we may as well leave them, at least in adult age, to the Scriptures as their alone teacher. What! Have we not abundant room for our ministrations, in endeavouring to remove prejudices, to lead the mind to trains of thought suited to bring it into a state of willingness to receive the truth, to obviate the effects of man's carelessness and indifference to religion, by laying before him the truths of God's word, and pointing out to him their true meaning, (which he is often too indifferent about them to search out,) to study the word of truth *for him*, and show him, by the collation of passages, what the mind of God is; to remove the objections which his humour or prejudices may start; to point out to him the number, the qualifications, and *the piety* of those who in past times have maintained such views of divine truth, (I say their *piety*, for "by their *fruits* ye shall know them," not by their *Apostolical succession*, which may be very good, while their doctrine is very bad;) and lastly, to press all home to the heart by earnest and affectionate exhortations and warnings; and then, as fallible men, leave it to the conscience to do its work, and to the final decision of the Supreme Judge to pronounce an *infallible* judgment? But no; all this is insufficient, because there are some who will not thus embrace the truth, and we *must* have, in one way or another, *some infallible judge upon earth*, in order to *make* people believe, and wield a power over their consciences which belongs to the Supreme Judge alone. And to create a judge that

has some appearance of infallibility, a certain number of big words and high-sounding phrases, such as "the Church," "Catholic consent," "the consent of *all* Christians from the beginning," (which either have no meaning at all, or else cannot be defined until we have determined the very thing for which this infallible judge is wanted, viz. the fundamental faith,) are thrown together, and there arises from the compound an idol, to which men are taught to bow down as the infallible expounder of God's will, the authoritative judge of controversies in religion.

Lastly, It is objected that if Scripture is the sole infallible judge of controversies of faith, it follows that men may interpret it as they please, and cannot be blamed whatever errors they may maintain; and that the only fundamental doctrine is the inspiration of the Bible.

Astounding as such an objection is, and obvious as is its illogical nature it is put forth as something wholly undeniable, and boasted of as a difficulty which nothing can remove. They who maintain the view for which we contend, "seem to allow," says Mr. Newman, "or to be in the way to allow, that truth is but matter of opinion, that *that is truth to each which each thinks to be truth*, provided he sincerely and really thinks it, that *the divinity of the Bible itself is the only thing that need be believed*, and that *its meaning varies with the individuals who receive it*, that it has no one meaning to be ascertained as a matter of fact, but that it may mean anything, because it is said to mean so many things;" and they have adopted "the latitudinarian notion that one creed is as good as another." (pp. 35, 6.) And this "principle of popular Protestantism" "tends by no very intricate process to the recognition of Socinians and Pelagians as Christians." (p. 291.) I need hardly add, that the objection is only an echo of a Romish one;¹ and a Romish one (be it observed) urged, like the rest, against *that very Church and those very men whom our opponents profess to follow in this matter*.

I feel bound to say, that this appears to me just like the last refuge of a disputant driven into a corner, and vexed at finding that he had not a single loophole of escape left, for any argument more groundless, any conclusion more unwarranted by the premises, any statement containing a more complete libel against God's word, never was devised as the last shift of a controversialist.

Mr. Newman's statements go even beyond the objection, as we have worded it, and altogether pass the bounds of reasonable and temperate discussion; for his words (as quoted above) clearly charge us with maintaining that the Scripture really *has* as

¹ Account, &c. of Guide in Controversies, by R. H. (as above quoted.)

many meanings as are *given* to it; so that in the hands of one person it *really teaches* Trinitarianism, and in the hands of another it *really teaches* Socinianism. *I here challenge Mr. Newman, as a man of truth, to point out any authority for this statement, such as will justify him in so making it, or to acknowledge his inability to do so.*

But to take the objection in its best form. What does it amount to? That if every man is to believe only as his private judgment of the meaning of Scripture directs him, he who follows his private judgment is not blameworthy, however erroneous his faith may be.

Now here, obviously, the conclusion is wholly unwarranted by the premises, for there are many causes tending to mislead the judgment for which a man is *responsible*, and blameworthy if they lead him into error. Such are, in this case, want of attention to the subject, indifference, worldly-mindedness, prejudices, aversion to the truth, negligence of the means of information, and of those helps which are suited to aid him in his inquiries into the meaning of God's word. And the true question is this, whether he who comes to the Scriptures with a sincere desire to know the truth, doing the will of God as far as he knows it, carefully, earnestly, and impartially endeavouring to ascertain the sense of Scripture, with prayer to God for his blessing upon the perusal of it, shall ever fail of obtaining a knowledge of its meaning in all fundamental points. All these things are within the power of every man, and he is blameworthy if he neglects any of them. We contend that this question can only be answered in the negative. No man thus coming to the Scriptures shall fail of obtaining a knowledge of the fundamental truths revealed in them; and for the proof of this position we have their sufficiency (to be proved more fully hereafter) to teach the faith, the character and promises of God, and the testimony of antiquity to the plainness with which all such points are delivered therein.

It follows then that every man is responsible to God for deducing the right faith from Scripture, and blameworthy if he does not.

The primary false principle in the objection of our opponents is, as throughout, the *assumption*, that Scripture is so ambiguous in its delivery of the fundamentals of the faith, that if God has not given us an authoritative interpreter whom we are bound in conscience to follow, we are *not responsible to him* for deducing the right faith, even in *essentials*, from Scripture, and *not blameworthy* if we maintain that it teaches Socinianism, Pelagianism, or anything else. Such is the character which our opponents affix to God's word in the Scriptures!

Nay more, it is broadly intimated (however inconsistently with other parts) that if we were left to Scripture alone, Socinians would have a very good defence to make. For, says Mr. Newman, "It is urged against them [i. e. by Socinians against those who hold our views], that, though the texts referred to *may* imply the catholic doctrine, yet they *need* not; that they are *consistent with any one out of several theories*." (p. 292.) Now if this is *justly* urged, and in that case only is it worth referring to, what becomes of Mr. Newman's remarks about Scripture *proof* for doctrine? And in what does his view differ from those which he professes to repudiate, viz., that Scripture is like a nose of wax, that can be turned any way? In fact, he has here *countenanced* the very notion which we have just seen him charging upon his opponents as an absurdity; viz., that Scripture "*may* mean any thing, because it is said to mean so many things." "Or, at any rate," it is added, "that other persons think so." What then? Is everything ambiguous that people dispute about? Let us take a case for an illustration of this point. What is the opinion entertained by a great number of professing Christians, as to the best means of obtaining happiness in this world? Is it not that it is to be derived almost solely from earthly sources? And if you press them with texts of Scripture bearing upon *this* point, have they not their reply ready, explaining away the passage so as to suit their own notions, and adducing others in defence of them? According, then, to Mr. Newman's mode of reasoning, the New Testament is altogether ambiguous upon this point, and we need some authoritative interpreter to tell us what it means; and he who chooses to think that it authorizes his earthly-minded career, is *blameless* before God, if there is no such interpreter.

Mr. Newman proceeds,—"*It is urged against them . . . that these others have as much right to their opinion as the party called orthodox to theirs; that human interpreters have no warrant to force upon them one view in particular; that private judgment must be left unmolested,*" &c. No; this cannot be justly urged against us, for this is what we hold. We do not *force* upon men one view; we do leave private judgment unmolested; but these objections are fairly urged against our opponents, because, when they claim infallibility, they do *force* upon men one view, and grievously molest private judgment. We hold, indeed, that Scripture has a clear and definite meaning in all necessary points; and that he who does not hold its meaning in such points, is fundamentally wrong; and therefore that every Church is bound to keep its communion pure, by separating from itself, and passing a sentence of condemnation upon those who, in its view, are obstinate heretics; but we hold, also, that there is no such authoritative infallible judge of controversies of faith on

earth, as can bind the conscience to the belief of any meaning it may affix to the Word of God; even though that meaning be taken from what is called the "consent of the Fathers."

And having thus libelled the Word of God, and accused it of being altogether of doubtful meaning, because some persons misrepresent its meaning, and attacked the Protestant doctrine of the right of private judgment, he triumphantly concludes, "*This reasoning, granting the first step, is resistless,*" and tells us that, "though certain individuals are not injured by the principle in question, [i. e. of the Bible being the sole authoritative rule of faith,] the body of men who profess it are, and ever must be, injured. For the mass of men, having no moral convictions, are led by reasoning, and by mere consistency of argument; and legitimately evolve heresy from principles which, to the better sort of men, may be harmless." (pp. 293, 4.) That is, men who are led by *reasoning*, and by *mere consistency of argument*, LEGITIMATELY EVOLVE HERESY from adhering to Scripture as the sole authoritative rule of faith.

May God in his mercy pity and forgive such libels against the sacred boon he has bestowed upon us in his Holy Scriptures, and not visit the sin upon our Church, in withdrawing from us altogether the light of that book so little prized, and leaving us again to grope our way in the darkness to which some among us would fain reduce us.

Nor let it be forgotten, that this objection is just as tenable against the views of our opponents, as against those for which we contend. For, as we have already shown, patristical tradition may be, and is, quoted on all sides. And, as Bishop Stillingfleet says,—“Why may not men mistake the sense of tradition, as well as the sense of Scripture? Is tradition more infallible in itself? Is it delivered by persons more infallible? Doth it make those to whom it is delivered infallible? Why, then, may not those who deliver it, and those who receive it, both be mistaken about it?” In the tradition of “Christ’s being the Son of God,” “the traditional words may be kept; and yet an heretical sense may be contained under them. Mr. S. answers, ‘That the sense of the words, and all the rest of Christ’s doctrine, is conveyed down by tradition.’ This is bravely said, if it could be made out; and would presently put an end to all disputes. For if all the doctrine of Christ be derived down to us in such a manner that we cannot mistake the sense of it, we must be all agreed whether we will or not. . . . But let us see how he proves that men cannot mistake the sense of tradition in particular points. The force of what he saith is, ‘That men were always men, and Christians were always Christians; and Mr. S. is always Mr. S., pretending demonstration, when there is nothing like it. If men were always

men, they were always apt to be deceived ; and unless Christians, by being such, are infallible, they are liable to mistakes. 'But the highest means to convey the sense of words, are to be found in tradition.' I am quite of another opinion ; *I think it the most uncertain way in the world ; and the corruptions of the first ages of the world are an evident proof of it*, when there were all possible advantages of tradition ; and yet the principles of natural religion were strangely corrupted, although they were plain, easy, few, of the highest importance, and men lived so long to inculcate them into the minds of their children." And he then proceeds to show the vanity of the argument adduced by J. S., as by our opponents, that there were *actions* in the rites and ordinances of the Church, as well as words, to show the true doctrines of Christianity.¹

Our opponents, then, may take back their argument, and answer it as it applies to their own system, and the same answer will do for us. If it follows from our regarding the Bible as the sole infallible rule of faith, that we thereby make the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible the only fundamental, and that men are not blameable, whatever doctrine they deduce from the Bible, so our opponents' hypothesis makes the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible and patristical tradition the only fundamental ; and men are not blameable, whatever doctrines they may deduce from *them* ; and so half the heretics, ancient and modern, are at once absolved.

I cannot conclude this chapter, however, without again calling the attention of the reader to the extraordinary fact that such doctrines as we have been considering, should be represented as the doctrines of the Church of England. Most painful, indeed, is it to observe the way in which the name of the Church of England has been used in this matter, and her authority quoted as supporting doctrines and statements against which, both in her authorized formularies and by her most celebrated divines, she has been for three centuries protesting, and still more painful to see how readily, nay eagerly, those representations are credited by many, and a few quotations of uncertain meaning received from the Tract writers in proof of their allegations, when other parts of the works of the same individuals show how completely opposed they were to the doctrines which they are quoted as supporting. But our opponents are wise in supposing that such names do them far more service than their own arguments on the subject ; and they have, indeed, as far as my experience goes, been the chief causes of the impression produced in many quarters in their favour.

¹ Disc. conc. nature and grounds of certainty of faith. pp. 42. et seq.

I have noticed above only the observations of Mr. Newman on this subject, but I need hardly observe, that his remarks are echoed in substance by the rest, and equally so by that corps of volunteers, who, though they disclaim any express and direct union with the writers of the Tracts, are almost always found on important points fighting side by side with them. One of these is Dr. Hook, who in the notes to his Visitation Sermon (p. 100) tells us, that they who hold the notion of the Bible being the sole infallible rule of faith, have no right to "refuse to regard as a Christian," a Socinian, *i. e.* in other words, to pronounce him to be involved in fundamental error nor to blame him for his error. No, doubtless, how can he be to blame when he has only got such an obscure book as the Bible to direct him? With such a guide how can he be expected to find the way? Nay, more, "*I believe it,*" says Dr. Hook, "*to be only on account of their being bad logicians, that they are not Socinians* : I believe that they ought to be, if consistent, both Dissenters and Socinians. If they accuse Church principles of tending to Popery, we think that their opinions must lead *logical and unprejudiced minds* to Socinianism." (p. 59.) So that the Bible when alone, directly leads *logical* minds to Socinianism? There is much comfort, however, in the reflection that it is the logic of our opponents that does so. But the Socinians, I am sure, must feel greatly obliged to Dr. Hook for the remark, for if hundreds and thousands do not after this join them, it will be no fault of Dr. Hook.

But then "*we of the Church of England,*" have got "*an arbiter to decide*" for us what the meaning of Scripture is, in "the Church" and "General Councils," the old high-sounding phrases and big words by which so many have been frightened into errors of all kinds. "But for this," adds Dr. H. "ultra-Protestants denounce us as papistical, and call *our Church the Church of the Traditioners.*" (p. 101.) Now if Dr. Hook would but have given himself time to make himself acquainted with the facts of the case, he would have found that this name was given for no reason of the kind. When the Puritans called the Church of England the Church of the Traditioners (See Dr. H.'s Sermon. p. 56), they did so not with reference to her going to *tradition* for doctrine, but because she considered that in matters of discipline the tradition of the early Church was a sufficient *justification* for her continuing some usages which had been observed in the Church in the time of Popery, and which the Puritans, who demanded Scriptural authority for every *usage*, wished to abolish; and if Dr. Hook will consult only his Hooker a little more attentively, he will easily find the truth of this. But this is just a specimen of the haste and carelessness of the party, and but one of a thousand. They are in such haste

and eagerness to establish their position, that they catch at every straw and broken reed that lies in their way, and when any famous divine of our Church has uttered a few words in commendation of the Fathers and the primitive Church, down they go as evidence for the truth of their positions, and his name figures in their next Catena; utterly unable, or rather unwilling, to draw the distinction between making the testimony of the Fathers an argument in confirmation of orthodoxy and claiming their testimony in one's favour, which our reformers most justly did, and putting it forward under big names and high-sounding phrases, as the arbiter of the meaning of Scripture, authoritatively declaring the truth and binding the conscience to belief without any appeal, a notion against which our Church has for three centuries been all but unanimous.

Dr. Hook's work contains a long extract (pp. 64 &c.) from the "Treatise on the Church," by the Rev. W. Palmer, another supporter of the Tractators, who, beginning with the complaint of "systematic misrepresentation," himself misrepresents most grievously. "The various methods which these men employ," he says, "in endeavouring to prevent ANY appeal to the tradition of the Church," &c., as if it was denied that "any appeal" might be made to it in the way of argument, when dissenters themselves have often made it. So again under the head of "statements directly untrue," it is he himself who is guilty. "Under this head," he says, "may be included the palmary argument employed by all sects against ANY appeal to the tradition of the Church Universal, namely, that it was the principle of the Reformation to reject *any* such appeal. . . . Nothing can be more untrue than this assertion: the Reformation as a whole acknowledged and appealed to the *authority* of catholic tradition, though it denied the *infallibility* of *particular* Fathers and Councils." Now, in the first place, "nothing can be more untrue" than that this assertion is so made, and on the other hand, nothing more untrue than that the Reformers appealed to the *authority* of catholic tradition in that sense of the word authority in which the last part of the sentence and the general argument show that it is here used, viz., as absolute and binding, and as if such tradition was infallible. There is a middle path, the true path of our Church, which Mr. Palmer, like the Tract writers, refuses to see, an appeal to the tradition of the Fathers as a good argument as far as it goes, but not as one in itself binding upon the conscience. He proceeds to tell us, that "in asserting this liberty to all men, [i. e. the liberty of judging after the due use of means what is the meaning of Scripture, for as to the words "in opposition to the belief of all Christians from the beginning," they are mere moonshine, because no one can

tell us what that belief has been, nor for one in ten thousand, as Mr. P. very well knows,] *it follows inevitably that no particular interpretation of Scripture is necessary to salvation ; that Scripture has no divine meaning, that it is not a revelation.*" Most logically argued! God has commissioned various persons to write several accounts of the Gospel, and he has given me reason sufficient to understand it. But if I say that I am at liberty to judge what those accounts mean, "it follows inevitably" that those accounts have no divine meaning," that they are "not a revelation," and that I may understand them to mean anything that my humour leads me to fancy. Such superficial and illogical views destroy the value of any learning with which they may be connected. For learning is then only valuable when united with correct and impartial reasoning.

The fact is, that this whole argument, with its invidious reference to Socinianism in order to raise a prejudice in the mind, is only another weapon drawn from the Romish armoury. It was long ago urged by the celebrated R. H., (*i. e.* Abraham Woodhead,) in the 4th Discourse of his "Guide in Controversies," where he represents the Socinian's Plea as being precisely that of the Protestant ; and which was fully and ably answered by Dr. Tenison, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, in his "Difference betwixt the Protestant and Socinian methods," a tract which I would strongly recommend to the serious perusal of our opponents, as one which very clearly lays down the principles of the Church of England in this point, and gives to the Fathers as well as to Scripture their proper place and respect. To quote from this work what is relevant to our present subject, would be to give the whole, but I cannot refrain from offering one or two extracts. "If men," says the Archbishop, "who plead Scripture as their rule of faith, make apology by so doing for all others who pretend to the same rule, then catholic Councils themselves plead for Socinians. For to give an example, the General Council of Chalcedon, and after it Evagrius, testifies, that the intent of the Second Council was to make it appear by SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY, that such as Macedonius erred in that opinion which they had advanced against the lordship of the Holy Ghost." (p. 35.) "I conclude that notwithstanding the Protestants and Socinians do both of them plead Scripture as the rule of faith, yet because Protestants plead the rule rightly in the point of the divinity of the Son of God, and the Socinians very falsely, even in the opinion of the Arians and Romanists themselves, the plea of the former does not justify the plea of the latter. . . . For the trial of the plea, we must come to the dint of argument, and truth is great and will in time prevail." (p. 37.)

He then proceeds to give the main argument of his antagonist

in order to its refutation, and he thus states it:—"Both Protestants and Socinians plead Scripture as *the sole rule of faith*. Both say the Scripture is *sufficiently clear*. Both say it is *clear in the doctrine of the nature of the Son of God*. The Socinian professeth himself to be as industrious in finding out the sense of the Scripture as the Protestant and he is as well assured in his persuasion; therefore the Protestant in this plea justifies the Socinian, the latter saying the same thing for himself that the former does." (p. 38.) Words could not have been chosen more accurately representing the argument of our opponents. This, be it remembered, is a Romanist's charge against the Church of England. How does the Archbishop meet it? Does he tell him that this is not the ground taken by the Church of England? Precisely the contrary. He tells him, "Though they pretend to the same rule, they walk not alike by it. One follows it, the other wrests it. *And this ought not to be turned to the judgement of him who is true to his rule.* LET BOTH OPINIONS BE BROUGHT TO IT, AND THEN IT WILL APPEAR WHICH IS STRAIGHT AND WHICH IS CROOKED. . . Though the Socinians do pretend that the writings of St. John are to them as clear as to any Protestant, and that they cannot discern in them the divinity of Christ, yet confidence in saying a thing is not clear, is not an argument that it is not. . . . Men will say doctrines are obscure even when they are secretly convinced of their evidence. . . . My adversary here (says a learned and good man) 'seems to object as elsewhere, that some who seem to follow the letter of the Scriptures deny this [that is, the divinity of Jesus Christ,] as do the Socinians. What then? This is not for want of evidence in Scripture, but from making or devising ways to avoid this evidence. Will this author say, that there was no evidence of there being angels and spirits amongst the Jews, because the Sadducees, who had opportunity of observing all such evidence, believed neither angel nor spirit? And will he say, that there was no clear evidence from the word of Christ and his miracles that they were from God, because the Pharisees and other unbelieving Jews who conversed with him, and saw his miracles, and heard his word, did not acknowledge him for God?' I suppose not." (pp. 38—40.) "Let a Romanist consider of the qualifications of a Protestant and a Socinian by *the effect of their labours in matters of Christian faith*, and if he be not blinded with very gross partiality he will acknowledge a difference. The Protestant *finds in the Scripture* the divinity of Christ and the Holy Ghost, and the merit of Christ's sacrifice; the Socinian pretends the contrary. If the Protestant and Socinian were equally disposed, how comes the one to interpret as a catholic, the other as a heretic? *And how can a Romanist believe that God gives an equal blessing*

to the industry of the Protestants and Socinians; whilst the latter do not so much as pray for grace to the Spirit of God, nor apply themselves to God the Father through the meritorious sacrifice of his blessed Son, nor to Christ himself as God, but as to the highest of creatures?" (p. 43.) "We have no need of confuting Arians and Socinians by Church-authority, seeing we can do it MORE EFFECTUALLY OUT OF THE SCRIPTURES; and if they say that the Scriptures are on their side, their saying so does not alter the nature of truth. And the Romanists allow that they say not true, and they may be *confuted* when they are not *silenced*. Protestants decline not a disputation with Socinians by the rule of primitive Church-authority. But if they undervalue this rule, it is discretion in Protestants to debate the matter with them in a way which they themselves best like of, seeing that is also a MORE CERTAIN AS WELL AS A MORE SPEEDY WAY TO VICTORY." (p. 47.) "Though the Church of England does not make the Councils her rule of faith, or make her last appeal to them; yet she believes that in times of controversy, when the heads of men are apt to be disturbed even in matters otherwise plain enough, by the heats and distempers of the age they live in, they are of special use. The authority of them tends to the quelling of the party; and then when the faction cools, it tends to the fixing and further strengthening of the weak and interrupted faith of many. For as in a balance, one scale may descend more or less below the level, so *there may be faith and assent without adding the weight of Fathers and Councils*; and yet in unquiet times especially, and disputing ages, such testimonies may *give some further strength* to minds made feeble, either by public distractions, or the private attacks of crafty seducers. Thus our Church gives to the Scripture the things that belong to the Scripture, and to tradition the dues of tradition. And it gives more even to the former than generally Socinians do, and more also to the latter though with just caution and subordination." (p. 33.)

The same argument was urged by the Romanists against our opponents' own witness, Bishop Stillingfleet, and is treated by him with ridicule. The Church of England and the Socinians, objected J. S., "both take the same way of Scripture's letter interpretable by private judgment, and yet differ in these fundamental points." "And what follows?" replies the Bishop. "That the Scripture is no certain rule? By no means. But that the Socinians may err, and certainly do in misinterpreting this rule. But how can it be a certain rule, if men that use it may err in using it?" How can reason be certain in anything if men following reason may mistake? How can arithmetic be a certain way of computation if men following the rules of arithmetic may

mistake in casting up a sum? Doth any man question the certainty of the rule for men's blundering in their accounts? Yet this is his way of reasoning. And I will put it just with his propositions. i. Arithmetic prescribes a certain way by addition and subtraction for us to find out any sum. ii. Therefore it must be such that they who take it shall arrive by it at the exact sum. iii. But two men who have made use of the same way differ at least a hundred in casting up the sum. iv. Therefore, arithmetic doth not prescribe a certain way to attain at a certain sum. v. Therefore, they who take only that way cannot by it arrive at the certain sum. Is not this clear and evident demonstration? But those who consider a little better than Mr. S. hath done, will distinguish between the rule and the application of it. The rule of arithmetic may be nevertheless certain, although those who want skill or care and diligence may mistake in casting up a particular account. The same we say here. Scripture is a *certain Rule* in all *fundamental points* to such as have capacity and use due care and diligence in finding them. But we do not deny but men through prejudice, weakness, want of attention, authority of false teachers, impatience of thoroughly examining things, and not using proper helps, may run into gross errors, such as these about the Trinity and Incarnation; but still the *RULE* is certain to those who use it aright, although it be very possible for men through their own faults to mistake about it. And this is no way disagreeing to the infinite wisdom of God, who deals with us as with rational creatures, and hath put faculties into us that we might use them in order to the certainty of our faith. And such *moral qualifications* are required in the New Testament in order to the discerning the doctrine of it, as humility of mind, purity of heart, prayer to God, sincere endeavour to do the will of God; that it would be very repugnant to the design of it to suppose that the letter of Scripture alone would give a man immediate and certain directions in all matters of doctrine being applied to it."

Such is the testimony of one who is continually put forward by our opponents as an advocate of their views.

And as they are fond of the authority of great names, and of boasting that their system is the true doctrine of the English Church, I shall conclude this chapter with an extract from a work of our learned Henry Wharton, (*one of the divines of the "Anglo-Catholic Library,"*) quoted in a preceding page.

"If in any part of the Christian religion an undoubted certainty and most firm assurance may justly be required: if a scrupulous examination and curious inquiry may ever be allowed

¹ *Dis. conc. nature and grounds of certainty of faith*, pp. 39, 40.

in matters of religion ; certainly, an exact knowledge of the *Rule of faith* will deserve, as our first, so our chief consideration. For since the articles of Christianity are not in themselves self-evident, nor can be found out by the sole principles of reason ; since all revealed religions are no further credible than as they can demonstrate their revelation to have been true and real, some rule was necessary which might propose to mankind those articles of faith which reason could not suggest, and propose them also with such evidence as that the denial of assent should in all become irrational. What this determinate rule is, hath been the great controversy of this and all preceding ages. However, all parties agree in affixing some certain properties to it, whereby it may be distinguished ; and, indeed, without which it can never supply the office or serve the ends of a true rule. These may be reduced to four heads, *that it be able safely and inviolably to convey down all revealed necessary truths ; that it be fitted to propose them CLEARLY and invariably to all mankind ; that it be independent on all other revealed articles ; and lastly, that it be assigned as a rule by God, the author of all revealed religion.* If either of the two first conditions be deficient, the rule will be unuseful ; if either of the latter, uncertain and without authority.

THE SCRIPTURE ENJOYS ALL THESE PROPERTIES IN SO EMINENT A MANNER, THAT NO REASONABLE DOUBT CAN BE MADE OF THE TRUTH OF IT. For if we consider that whatsoever is revealed may be pronounced ; whatsoever is pronounced may be written down ; and whatsoever is committed to writing may be preserved safe, while those writings are preserved unaltered ; we must conclude that any revealed religion may be entirely and without danger of mistake *proposed from written books to the universal belief of mankind*, since these will afford a standing rule, both to pastors of teaching their people, *and to the people of examining the doctrine of their pastors in case of dissidence.* The independence of Scripture from all other revealed articles, is no less evident. For that these books were indeed written by those persons whose names they bear, and these persons highly credible, is known by the same evidences whereby the authors and credibility of any other books are known ; I mean by the concurrent testimony and consent of *all succeeding ages*, considered *not as a collection of men professing the Christian faith*, but as persons devoid neither of common sense nor integrity, as they must have been, if they had mistaken themselves, or deluded us, in believing and then testifying a matter of fact so easy to be known, and more easy to be remembered. Being thus assured of the credibility of Scripture, that it was written by such historians, who really either performed or saw those miracles which

they do attest, we cannot but believe these miracles; and, consequently, that the authors and founders of the Christian religion acted by a divine commission, and may reasonably command our assent to their revelations. Being thus assured of the divine authority of the Scriptures, we may *probably conclude from the nature and end of them*, but MOST CERTAINLY FROM THEIR OWN TESTIMONY, that they contain all things necessary to salvation, and are THE ONLY RULE OF FAITH; *and all this although we did not yet believe any other article of the Christian religion.*"¹

¹ Preface to "A Treatise proving Scripture to be the Rule of faith, &c. Lond. 1688." 4to.

THE END OF VOL. I.

